

Hafa Adai!

\$25K bail imposed on man who allegedly burglarized Hopwood. **PAGE 2**
Surprise inspection at DOC using K-9 unit finds contraband. **PAGE 3**

\$1

Saipan Tribune



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Revised budget: \$116.19M

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

» **Government work hours may be reduced from 80 to 72 hours**

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios transmitted yesterday morning to

the Legislature his request to revise the 2023 CNMI budget with estimated total of net gross revenue and resources of \$116.19 million to

ensure the continuity of essential government functions, programs, and services.

Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang announced the transmission of the proposed revision of the budget in a news briefing in the governor's conference room yesterday.

See **BUDGET** on Page 4

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Days until 'touchback rule' takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

205

'NMI needs to work with all airline partners'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

If the CNMI wants to get back to some semblance of a pre-COVID-19 pandemic economy, it needs to work with all airline partners in addressing air transportation issues.



Manglona

That's according to Sen.

» **Senate PUTC calls for public hearing regarding interisland air transportation issues**

Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the Senate Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Commu-

See **AIRLINE** on Page 4

High court sets aside dismissal of Anaks' petition against Atkins Kroll's dealership

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The Supreme Court has ruled in favor of Anaks Ocean View Hill Homeowners Association in its appeal to vacate the Superior Court's previous decision to dismiss its petition against the Zon-

ing permit issued to Atkins Kroll for a Toyota/Lexus dealership and vehicle repair facility in Puerto Rico.

The Supreme Court issued yesterday its ruling regarding the Anaks Homeowners Association's appeal and found that the association's petition

See **COURT** on Page 4

Chinese ships cut internet of Taiwan's outlying islands

By **HUIZHONG WU** and **JOHNSON LAI**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NANGAN, Taiwan (AP)—

In the past month, bed and breakfast owner Chen Yulin had to tell his guests he couldn't provide them with the internet.

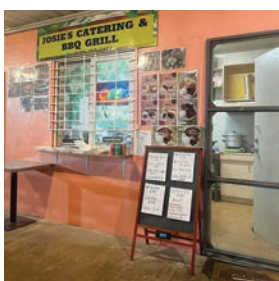
Others living on Matsu, one of Taiwan's outlying islands closer to neighboring China, had to struggle with paying electricity bills, mak-

ing a doctor's appointment or receiving a package.

For connecting to the outside world, Matsu's 14,000

See **INTERNET** on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

The aroma of barbecue is wafting again at Kada Dia with the recent opening of Josie's Catering.

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NATION

A road trip to Mexico veered off course when four Americans were caught in a drug cartel shootout.

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LIFE & STYLE

The Pritzker Architecture Prize has been awarded to urban planner David Alan Chipperfield.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

\$25K bail imposed on man who allegedly burglarized Hopwood

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate
Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio

has imposed a \$25,000 cash bail on a man accused of burglarizing the Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Middle School last month.

After nearly a month since the string of burglaries occurred at Hopwood, Department of Public Safety has finally found its suspect,

Tipingeni Mcpeterson, who has been charged with burglary and theft.

Mcpeterson remains in Department of Corrections cus-

tody after failing to post bail.

According to a DPS report, at around 10:13am last Feb. 24, DPS dispatch received a call reporting a burglary and theft incident at Hopwood in Chalan Piao.

Officers were dispatched to the scene met with the school

principal and were informed that the campus had been burglarized twice in just a week.

According to the principal, the first incident occurred on Feb. 17, at around 11:22pm. The suspect was caught on surveillance cameras breaking

See BAIL on Page 4

JKPL will host RDR Game Day on Saturday

In honor of a beloved friend and colleague, Roy Diaz Rechebei, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library will be celebrating the Roy Diaz Rechebei or RDR Game Day this Saturday,

March 11, 2023, to mark the fifth year since he was called to eternal life on March 11, 2018.

JKPL is inviting all "Magic: The Gathering" players to join and keep their draft booster

cards by the end of the game day. MTG card set that will be used for this game day is "Infinity." Special thanks go out to the Rechebei family for sponsoring the event.

For more information regarding this event or how to sponsor this event, contact Joey Songsong at (670) 235-7323. We welcome and encourage sponsors to please consider donating cash contributions to RDR Game Day. **(PR)**

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PET OF THE WEEK

Charley



Charley is a very lively and friendly dog, about 7 months old, neutered, and in good health. He enjoys going for walks and during these walks, he loves the opportunity to express his puppy nature by collecting coconut husks and playing with them while also zooming around and rolling on the ground and trying to tempt other dogs on the grounds to join him in his lively antics.

Dr. James Kline, the person who found him, is currently

caring for Charley but Kline resides off island for three months of the year and would feel much better if someone is able to provide a permanent year-round care for Charley.

Charley is currently residing at the Kannat Garden Apartments with Kline. Contact Kline at (670)-788-4922 if you are interested in adopting Charley, who is also registered at the Saipan Mayor's Animal Shelter.

Saipan Tribune features adoptable pets every Thursday as a public service. If you would like to feature a pet for adoption, just email the pet's basic information to editor@saipantribune.com.



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02-2023

Opening date: February 20, 2023 Closing date: March 10, 2023

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (1) ARFF General Maintenance I
(1) ARFF Mechanic II
(1) Lease Compliance Assistant
(1) Information Systems Specialist

SALARY

PL 3/1 to 3/12 (\$8.01/hr. to \$13.70/hr.)
PL 6/1 to 6/12 (\$9.27/hr. to \$15.85/hr.)
PL 14/1 to 14/12 (\$13.70/hr. to \$23.42/hr.)
PL 15/1 to 15/12 (\$14.38/hr. to \$24.60/hr.)

Location: PORT OF SAIPAN

Position(s): (2) Vessel Traffic Controller

SALARY

PL 4/1 to 4/12 (\$8.41/hr. to \$14.38/hr.)

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I
(1) Radio Operator/Weather Observer
(1) Custodial-I

SALARY

PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr. to \$15.10/hr.)
PL 7/1 to 7/12 (\$9.73/hr. to \$16.65/hr.)
PL 1/1 to 1/12 (\$7.26/hr. to \$12.42/hr.)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, March 10, 2023**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

To DOC personnel using drugs: You need to stop now

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In his first week with the Department of Corrections, act-

ing commissioner Anthony Cabrera Torres told all personnel to stop now if they're into illegal drugs. On his second week, he did a surprise

inspection using trained dogs from the CNMI Division of Customs Biosecurity and they found contraband. Torres disclosed yesterday

the seizure of contraband during the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee's confirmation for his appointment, during which he received broad support from many DOC officials and others.

At the conclusion of the confirmation hearing, EAGI Committee chair Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said the committee has determined that Torres meets the expectations and qualifications of a DOC commissioner and that they will recommend his confirmation to the full Senate.

Torres mentioned the issue of drug addiction in response to Babauta's question during the hearing about serious problems he has identified at DOC.

He noted that on his first week he met with his upper management, during which he laid out his expectations, and to everybody else as well during their briefings with the line staff.

"Part of messages that I put out [is] if you know you're not supposed to be doing it, you need to stop now. Because if you get pulled up, I will hold you accountable," Torres said.

He said he encouraged those who are struggling with addiction of some sort

to reach out to him and that he will address the matter confidentially and will try to get them some treatment.

"But if you wait until after two or three weeks and you get randomly selected and you got positive, I will hold you accountable," said Torres, adding that his leadership style is firm, fair, and consistent.

Torres said that on his second week with DOC, he met with the CNMI Customs and Biosecurity director J.J. Atalig, and requested them to bring the K-9 dogs down to DOC. He said he did not tell any DOC staff about his plan.

Torres said that gave him an opportunity to do a full sweep and gave him an idea of what he's dealing with.

"And I plan to do that more and more...until...we can get the facility to where it should be," he said.

Torres did not provide more details about the contraband that were seized.

Torres vowed that if the Senate confirms him, he will discharge the responsibilities of this job to the very best of his ability. "I love the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and I love our people," he said.

He said he will increase employee retention and improve inmate quality of life.

Former lawmaker and former Department of Public

Safety and Fire Department commissioner Claudio K. Norita, who was among the many people who testified in support of Torres' nomination, said, "Tony's arrival is a blessing for the Commonwealth."

Torres began his law enforcement career in 1999 as an adult correctional officer for the Department of Public Safety at Halawa Prison in Honolulu, Hawaii. In 2002, Torres advanced his career as a correctional officer for the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons at the Federal Detention Center Honolulu. In 2015, he was promoted to treatment specialist in the Challenge Program at the U.S. Penitentiary Tucson, a high-security federal prison in Arizona. In 2018, Torres was assigned to the Federal Correctional Institution Tucson, as a drug treatment specialist working in the Non-Residential Drug Abuse Program.

He has an educational background in Criminal Justice from Chaminade University in Honolulu. Holding a black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, he was the first Chamorro to compete in the Ultimate Fighting Championship.

Former lawmaker Stanley Torres, who is the father of the appointee, was present, along with other family members, at the hearing.

IN CELEBRATION OF INT'L WOMEN'S DAY

Crowne Plaza Resort pampers women staff



Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan staff and management are seen in their employee cafeteria during their special lunch celebration and day of activities in the hotel's celebration of International Women's Month on Tuesday.

LEIGH GASES



Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan staff and management pose for a photo with their donation of bath towels, bath mats, and face towels to Guma Esperanza yesterday morning.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

In honor of the celebration of International Women's Day yesterday, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan treated its female staff to makeovers and massages to express the hotel resort's appreciation. The hotel also donated to Guma Esperanza, which is the women's shelter for domestic violence and human trafficking.

After a special lunch celebration in the employees' cafeteria, complete with cake and a speech from general manager Robert Coates, beautician Rica Lozarito from Mary's Salon in Garapan glammed up the women on duty on Tuesday, a day before International Women's Day.

About 20 women were given a corporate makeover, complete with makeup and hairstyle tips appropriate for the hotel's grooming standards and topped the day of pampering with a massage by Lanie Agulay and Jethro De Guzman.

Lozarito was approached by Crowne Plaza management to arrange the day of pampering and she obliged because she loves assisting the community. She said she knows the importance of celebrating and showing femininity and it was a great makeover for women who are always busy with work and family.

She thanked Crowne Plaza for the collaboration and hopes to assist the community with her services again when she is able to.

Trixie Sablan, Crowne Plaza

Resort Saipan's sales and marketing supervisor, said, "It's not every day that we have these activities so it's a really nice way to showcase and empower and show appreciation to our women in the workplace."

The hotel is also proud of being inclusive and embraces equity as they have staff in the LGBTQ+ community, so "it's a really great opportunity to get together and celebrate," said Sablan.

Quinn Cepeda, who was given a massage and makeover said that she felt relaxed during her massage and appreciated the pampering.

Coates, in his speech to kickstart the celebration, said that International Women's Day is about "recognizing diversity in our society. For a long time, women have not been treated equally. ... This day is about recognizing women in our family, at work, and in our community. Women are a critical part of our lives and it's about recognizing their contribution to society. So, we want to celebrate and recognize women in our workplace."

"IHG is a company that celebrates diversity. We're an organization that celebrates whatever it may be—ethnicity, gender, orientation, religion. We encourage diversity in our workplace and we support and endorse it," said Coates.

Along with the day of activities for their women staff, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan also celebrated women's day yesterday by donating bundles of bath towels, bath mats, and

face towels to Guma Esperanza, which is the women's shelter for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.



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CUC: As Perdido repair to be finished today

There was an emergency water service interruption last Tuesday, March 7, 2023, due to a mainline leak located on As Perdido Road near the Texas Road intersection, affecting As Gonno, Koblerville, As Perdido, Chalan Piao, San Antonio, Chalan Kanoa and Susupe.

Due to extent of repairs necessary,

» Water outage in areas of As Gonno, Koblerville, As Perdido, Chalan Piao, San Antonio, Chalan Kanoa, and Susupe

the water outage will be extended until 6pm today, March 9, 2023. Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in this area are asked to conserve

water during this interruption and to avoid the construction zone on As Perdido Road. Road restrictions will return to one-way traffic only over-

night with eastbound traffic detouring through Texas Road.

For the safety of the men and women on the job site, motorists are advised to take alternative routes as an eastbound lane on As Perdido Road will be closed for the duration of the repair.

For those customers in the immediate vicinity of the construction zone who are completely without water, CUC staff had activated a filling sta-

tion at a Hopwood Middle School hydrant that was available until last night. Additional updates will be provided as repairs progress.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

INTERNET

From Page 1

residents rely on two submarine internet cables leading to Taiwan's main island. The first cable was severed by a Chinese fishing vessel some 50 kilometers (31 miles) out at sea. Six days later, on Feb. 8, a Chinese cargo ship cut the second, according to Chunghwa Telecom, Taiwan's largest service provider and owner of the cables.

The islanders in the meantime were forced to hook up to a limited internet via microwave radio transmission, a more mature technology, as backup. It means one could wait hours to send a text. Calls would drop, and videos were unwatchable.

"A lot of tourists would cancel their booking because there's no internet. Nowadays, the internet plays a very large role in people's lives," said Chen, who lives in Beigan, one of Matsu's main residential islands.

Apart from disrupting lives, the

loss of the internet cables, seemingly innocuous, has huge implications for national security.

As the full-scale invasion of Ukraine has shown, Russia has made taking out internet infrastructure one of the key parts of its strategy. Some experts suspect China may have cut the cables deliberately as part of its harassment of the self-ruled island it considers part of its territory, to be reunited by force if necessary.

China regularly sends warplanes and navy ships toward Taiwan as part

of tactics to intimidate the island's democratic government. Concerns about China's invasion, and Taiwan's preparedness to withstand it, have increased since the war in Ukraine.

The cables had been cut a total of 27 times in the past five years, according to Chunghwa Telecom.

Taiwan's coast guard gave chase to the fishing vessel that cut the first cable on Feb. 2, but it went back to Chinese waters, according to a person who was briefed on the incident and was not authorized to discuss the

matter publicly.

So far, the Taiwanese government has not pointed a direct finger at Beijing.

"We can't rule out that China destroyed these on purpose," said Su Tzu-yun, a defense expert at the government think tank, Institute for National Defense and Security Research, citing a research that only China and Russia had the technical capabilities to do this. "Taiwan needs to invest more resources in repairing and protecting the cables."

AIRLINE

From Page 1

nications, in response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry yesterday.

Manglona said they also want to discuss with the Commonwealth Ports Authority and Marianas Visitors Authority what they're doing to address the CNMI's air transportation challenges with regards to inter-island travel.

Toward this end, Manglona called for a PUTC public hearing in the Senate chamber this Wednesday, March 15, at 9am, to discuss the CNMI's interisland air transportation issues.

Those requested to be present at the hearing and provide comments are representatives of Marianas Southern Airways, Star Marianas Air, and the three chambers of commerce

(Saipan, Tinian, and Rota).

Also invited to provide comments are the CPA executive director and board members, MVA managing director and board members, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer, and members of the municipal council of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Manglona also invited to provide comments the Department of Commerce secretary, Rota Mayor Aubry M. Hocog, Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, and Saipan Mayor Ramon B. Camacho.

At the hearing, the PUTC Committee wants to know from the existing interisland airline companies how the government and Legislature can assist them.

The senator said the Senate PUTC and Resources, Economic Development and Programs and Gaming

committees have been holding meetings since the beginning of the year pertaining to interisland air transportation services as well as international airline connections.

A petition to save Marianas Southern Airways, as well as other airlines, was launched early this week with the hope that enough signatures will encourage CNMI officials to sit down with these airlines to come to a resolution that will benefit the community as a whole.

The online petition came after the Palacios-Apatang administration decided to terminate the \$8-million sole-source contract with Marianas Southern Airways; the Federal Aviation Administration's recommendation that Star Marianas Air pays off what it owes CPA; and Asiana's decision to suspend its Korea-Saipan service.

BUDGET

From Page 1

day afternoon, shortly after meeting with the Senate and House of Representatives majority bloc.

The governor also requested additional and temporary reprogramming flexibility of up to 50% of the funds appropriated to the operations and activities of the departments, agencies, and offices of the executive branch, cumulative and in total.

The approved budget for the CNMI's government's operations in fiscal year 2023 is just \$109.7 million, but with additional funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and from the Community Disaster Loan. Combining the \$109,782,265 million from the general fund and the \$32,624,344 allocated to the CNMI from ARPA, the CNMI government had at its disposal a total of \$142,406,609 million for government operations in this fiscal year.

That ARPA and CDL funds that were embedded in the approved budget are now gone, Palacios said.

"Those funds are pretty much depleted. And we need to make those adjustments," said the governor.

The CDL funds were supposed to cover the CNMI's local match for Medicaid and the 25% portion of retiree pensions.

Palacios said both ARPA and CDL funds were overspent and overcommitted by the previous Torres administration and are no longer available this fiscal year.

He said they also needed to revise the budget because the present 2023 budget did not include much operational funds to run the government.

He said they made some painful proposals in the revised budget. "We will have to cut costs, and one of the costs that is going to cut is downward departure of 80 hours to 72 hours," Palacios said.

He said ARPA funds were intended to cover approximately 20% of the government's personnel costs, and its removal from the budget would have resulted in a corresponding reduction in personnel hours from 80 hours to 64 hours per pay period. However, because of a slight upstick in pro-

jected local revenues, together with savings from cost-containment measures, he said they are proposing that the reduction in hours will only be from 80 to 72 hours.

"When we're making adjustments, we wanted to see whether we can at least minimize the pain to our employees, so rather than going 64, we're proposing to go 72 and use the additional revenue that we believe would be realized in the last six months of the fiscal year," Palacios said.

The governor said the CNMI had at one point nearly \$600 million from ARPA and CDL that would have been sufficient to help the CNMI cover expenditures through 2026.

"We depleted that pretty much in 18 months," he said, referring to over \$481 million in ARPA allocation.

Palacios said he is hoping that the Legislature will consider his proposed budget revision and act expeditiously. He said to adjust the general fund resources requires amendment to the concurrent resolution for the resources available and include the additional funds.

"And this is not the only cuts that we will be making. This is necessary to make sure that we are also basically legal and lawful in expenditure of public funds," he said.

Palacios said if they are not successful to come to a resolution on this, he is authorized as governor to make the necessary adjustments. He said part of that adjustments is to make proportionate cuts across all branches of all programs of government.

"We don't want really to do that at this point," the governor said.

Apatang noted that there are some positive developments from economic activities that have also led them to propose this revised budget.

Apatang said that, based on the collections posted in the first and second quarters of the current fiscal year, and their analysis of the trends in the previous three fiscal years, they are projecting a modest 11% increase in revenue collections, or about \$11.8 million.

He said these \$11.8 million will be reallocated to government's operations and priority obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

COURT

From Page 1

was filed within the time required, therefore the Superior Court's previous dismissal should be set aside.

The case now goes back to the Superior Court for its review of the Zoning Board's decision.

"We vacate the Superior Court's order dismissing Anaks' petition for lack of jurisdiction and *sua sponte* remand for further proceedings consistent with this order," said the court.

The Supreme Court's 12-page order agrees with Anaks that the 30-day period to submit its petition commenced when the Zoning Board issued the conditional use permit to Atkins Kroll on April 13, 2022.

"The issuance of the conditional

use permit consummated the Zoning Board's decision-making process and determined the rights and obligations of the parties. Thus, for purposes of the Zoning Board, the issuance of a permit serves as a final agency action," said the court.

Aside from its request to overturn the Superior Court's dismissal, Anaks also moved to stay the effective date of the conditional use permit issued to Atkins Kroll and asked that the high court take judicial notice of various documents that the Zoning Board considered before issuing the conditional use permit.

However, because the dismissal has been vacated and the case has been remanded back to Superior Court for review, the motions are considered moot.

"We deny Anaks' motion to stay

agency action. We further deny Anaks' and Atkins Kroll's requests for judicial notice," the court ordered.

Previously, the Supreme Court found that the Superior Court had jurisdiction to review the Zoning permit issued to Atkins Kroll for the construction of a facility in Puerto Rico, Saipan.

Atkins Kroll first applied for a permit with the Zoning Board last Jan. 4, 2022, to build its dealership and vehicle repair facility next to the Anaks Condominium complex in Puerto Rico.

On March 18, 2022, the Zoning Board approved Atkins Kroll's permit and issued it on April 13, 2022.

Anaks filed a petition to challenge the permit in the Superior Court but the Superior Court dismissed the petition because it found that it was untimely filed.

red-colored T-shirt over his head.

The photos were provided to the CNMI CrimeStoppers to seek public assistance in identifying the man in the photos. On Feb. 24, investigators received several tips through CrimeStoppers identifying the suspect from the surveillance footage to be Mcpeterson.

On March 2, at around 7:34pm, a warrant was issued for Mcpeterson's arrest. Later that same evening, detectives arrested Mcpeterson in Chalan Piao.

Investigation Division, were shown the campus surveillance footage from the two separate dates.

Police confirmed that the male individual, later identified as Mcpeterson, was seen forcing entry into a campus storage room, and stealing items inside.

The individual was seen on camera wearing a blue hooded shirt with a diamond pattern print on the front.

In a separate photo, the individual was seen wearing a pair of dark short pants, a blue striped tank top, and a

BAIL

From Page 2

into the campus storage room.

The second incident, the school principal said, occurred on Feb. 19, at around 9:32am. The suspect was again seen on camera running away from school grounds, holding what was later identified as a stolen item.

Through the course of their investigation, detectives from the Criminal

OMB's Villagomez issues budget call

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Virginia C. Villagomez, the special assistant for the Office of Management and Budget, issued last week a budget call to all expenditure authorities to submit their proposed budget and spending plans for fiscal year 2024.

Villagomez's budget call memorandum was addressed to all department and activity heads, all autonomous/semi-autonomous agencies, all independent programs, and all federal programs.



Villagomez

Pursuant to the Commonwealth Code, the governor's proposed annual budget for fiscal year 2024 must be submitted to the Legislature by April 1, 2023.

Budget submissions for the new administration is due for submission to the Legislature by May 1, 2023.

Villagomez said preparation and submission of the budget will include all three branches of government, all government corporations, including all private non-profits being subsidized by general fund appropriations, and all federally

BMV unsure when license system will be up and running

After over a month since their license system went down, the Department of Public Safety Bureau of Motor Vehicles is unsure when it will be up and running again.

According to the Department of Public Safety, the BMV's Real ID driver's license system is still undergoing maintenance and remains down.

When asked when maintenance of the system would be completed, DPS stated they are unsure.

DPS stated that while their system remains down, BMV will continue to issue temporary licenses. This means motorists applying for a Real ID or a non-Real ID driver's license will be issued a temporary certificate, which will be valid for 15 days.

Then, once the Real ID machine maintenance is completed, those temporary certificates will be replaced with a regular Real ID or non-Real ID driver's license card.

DPS said in the event the maintenance of the machines is not completed in 15 days, the temporary certificates can be updated by BMV free of charge. (Kimberly B. Esmores)

funded programs continuing in fiscal year 2024.

The OMB has established a baseline allocation as a guid-

ance for each agency to start its budget formulation using the current estimated revenues pursuant to Public Law

22-22. Changes to the baseline allocation will vary between departments and may occur before the submission

should the acting Finance secretary Tracy B. Norita identify an adjustment in the net resources.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

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Beach Road repair project to start by mid-March

The Department of Public Works would like to inform the public that the Beach Road Roadway and Drainage Construction is expected to begin by mid-March this year.

Road construction will begin from Hopwood Junior High School and continuing toward the San Jose Intersection or Atkins Kroll Toyota. Active times of construction

will be from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Sunday.

All users traversing along the area are being advised to take caution along the construction site as the double-lane highway would be reduced to one way and there might be road closures in some cases for on-site workers and heavy equipment mobility.

“DPW strongly encourag-

es the public to exercise caution; be courteous of roadway workers; and to follow posted traffic control signs at all times (day and night). DPW and its partnering agency and con-

tractors appreciate the public’s patience as construction work continues,” said a DPW statement yesterday.

All inquiries and concerns may be directed to the Highway Administrator, Lorraine S. Villagomez, at (670) 235-5827/9570, PEGS, LLC (construction management) at 233-7770, or GPPC Inc. (contractor) at 234-7900. (PR)

Power interruption in Kagman III, China Town

There will be a scheduled power service interruption in the following areas listed below:

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023, for Kagman III

- **Time:** 1:30pm to 2:30pm
- **Area affected:** Kagman III
- **Purpose:** For the line crew to reconnect the overhead primary conductor jumpers that were disconnected along Gaogao Drive
- **Water well(s) affected:** None
- **Wastewater facility affected:** None
- **Traffic light(s) affected:** None

TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023, for China Town

- **Time:** 9am to 1pm

- **Area affected:** China Town
 - **Purpose:** For the line crew to perform a system maintenance by replacing a defective primary wooden power pole to a concrete pole and to re-sag primary lines on Chalan Pale Arnold Road
 - **Water well(s) affected:** None
 - **Wastewater facility affected:** S9
 - **Traffic light(s) affected:** Middle Road intersection traffic light of China Town and Garapan
- For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at (670) 236-4333 or at (670) 664-4282 or monitor our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>) for the latest updates. (PR)



MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Seated from left, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager Robert Coates, Northern Marianas Technical Institute CEO Jodina Attao, Island Training Solution’s Jim Arenovski, and Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan’s executive sous chef Zenn Tomokane are joined by the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan executive and leadership team Tuesday morning after Coates and Attao signed a memorandum of agreement at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan’s Azucena Room. The agreement starts the partnership with Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, NMTech, and ITS to build local capacity and training in the hospitality and tourism industry.

LEIGH GASES

Isla Montessori turns 5 today

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

After five years of service, the Isla Montessori school is holding a special anniversary celebration on their school grounds in Dan Dan today and is inviting the community to participate in this event and join the celebration.

As a nonprofit organization born just before Super Typhoon Yutu hit the CNMI

in 2018 and surviving in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school describes itself as resilient, having survived turbulent times besetting the Commonwealth.

School head Tatiana Ilmova said the school came about when group of parents and teachers opened the school five years ago.


“That same year Yutu came and destroyed one of our classes, and we had to re-

build it. ...And then COVID hit us. But we survived through those obstacles and now we are growing very steady,” she said.


The school uses the Montessori philosophy in their teaching, which is basically a child-centered, developmentally-based approach to education. As stated in their website, this type of education philosophy views the child as one that is eager for knowledge, and who will “initiate learning in a supportive, stimulating, and thoughtfully prepared learning environment.”

Although it is not the only Montessori school on island, Ilmova shared that they are the only one that proudly incorporates the Carolinian and Chamorro cultures in their teaching and is a big part of their learning methods.

The school is located in Dan Dan on Flores street. For more information visit their website at www.islamontessori.org.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JVA No. 23-043

Opening Date: March 6, 2023
Closing Date: March 17, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	Administrative Technician
DEPARTMENT:	Power Division, Transmission & Distribution
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$20,826.00 - \$28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Division Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Performs journey-level administrative support of assigned department, service or specialty area by providing customer support, document review and processing, and by scheduling and coordinating services or resources.
- Gathers information and distributes a variety of documents which may include: vouchers; reports, requisitions, work orders, service certifications, correspondence, and status updates.
- Monitors scheduling needs for meetings, equipment maintenance, and/or other relevant service requirements; schedules and coordinates appointments, resources and/or services.
- Receives calls and service requests; responds to and resolves inquiries or problems and may provide dispatch services; advises public on applicable procedures and policies; provides assistance with completing forms and paperwork; and directs inquiries or issues to appropriate resource for resolution.
- Reviews and verifies data and documents for accuracy and completion; reconciles data discrepancies; performs data entry; and maintains databases, records and files.
- Maintains and orders office supplies and materials; processes requisitions; monitors and/or inspects equipment for required service needs.
- Assists in the administration and coordination of special events, training, programs and/or projects.
- Monitoring fleet vehicle fuel consumption and vehicle maintenance.
- Inspecting vehicles and distributing and collecting keys from vehicle operators.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements: Associates Degree or High School Diploma/GED or ABE Program AS and 2 years of office or customer service experience.


Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Filing and recordkeeping principles; Mathematical concepts; Inventory and supplies maintenance practices; Specialized equipment relevant to area of assignment; Modern office technology. Strong interpersonal and communication skills, clerical skills, and moderate computer proficiency.

Skills in: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Filing and recordkeeping principles; Mathematical concepts; Inventory and supplies maintenance practices; Specialized equipment relevant to area of assignment; Modern office technology. Strong interpersonal and communication skills, clerical skills, and moderate computer proficiency.


All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources Department located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm (except legal holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be emailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JVA No. 23 – 050

Opening Date: March 6, 2023
Closing Date: March 17, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	Fiscal Assistant/Dispatch Operator
DEPARTMENT:	COA/Customer Service/Call Center
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief of Administration or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Monitors radio communications in order to dispatch crews for troubleshooting and for related service calls.
- Receives incoming calls reporting complaints or issues related to water, sewer or power utilities; provides general customer service; and routes service calls to appropriate resource.
- Organizes and maintains file systems and pertinent records.
- Performs data entry; maintains and updates logs and dispatch related documentation.
- Prepares and maintains requisitions.
- Follows up with customers to provide basic information, status updates, and to verify customer's experience and any remaining service needs.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and up to 1 year of customer service experience.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic recordkeeping principles; Radio communications equipment procedures; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Monitoring and utilizing radio communications and equipment; receiving and routing service or problem calls; entering, updating and maintaining data; organizing and maintaining filing systems and records; preparing and updating logs, records and related documentation; performing follow up calls to ensure adequate service provision; utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Big name-brand companies benefit illegally from migrant child labor

The Biden administration says it will crack down on the use of migrant child labor at U.S. plants and factories serving some of the nation's biggest brand names. Think well-known consumer brands like Frito-Lay, Nature Valley granola bars, Lucky Charms, J. Crew and Cheetos. Now think of exhausted children working under conditions that have led to severed fingers, head wounds or even lost lives, including a dozen young migrant workers since 2017, according to The New York Times.

The workplace crackdown is long overdue, but it solves only half the problem. Many if not most of the youths who have crossed into the United States illegally have done so without their parents. Some reunited with their parents on this side. But in nearly all cases, they were fleeing dire conditions at home and are working in the United States out of desperate economic necessity. That necessity won't end with the crackdown. In fact, it'll only get worse if the kids aren't bringing home a paycheck.

Some might argue that it serves them right, and that they should go back where they came from. If it were that easy, the immigration problem would've been solved decades ago. Many of these children are fleeing intolerable situations at home: forced gang recruitment, kidnapping for ransom or sale to sex traffickers. They are granted temporary U.S. entry while their asylum cases are processed—as is their legal right regardless of whether a Republican or Democratic administration is in power. The Department of Health and Human Services then takes over monitoring the youths to ensure they're properly cared for, but the agency has lost track of an estimated 85,000 of them in the past two years, the Times reported.

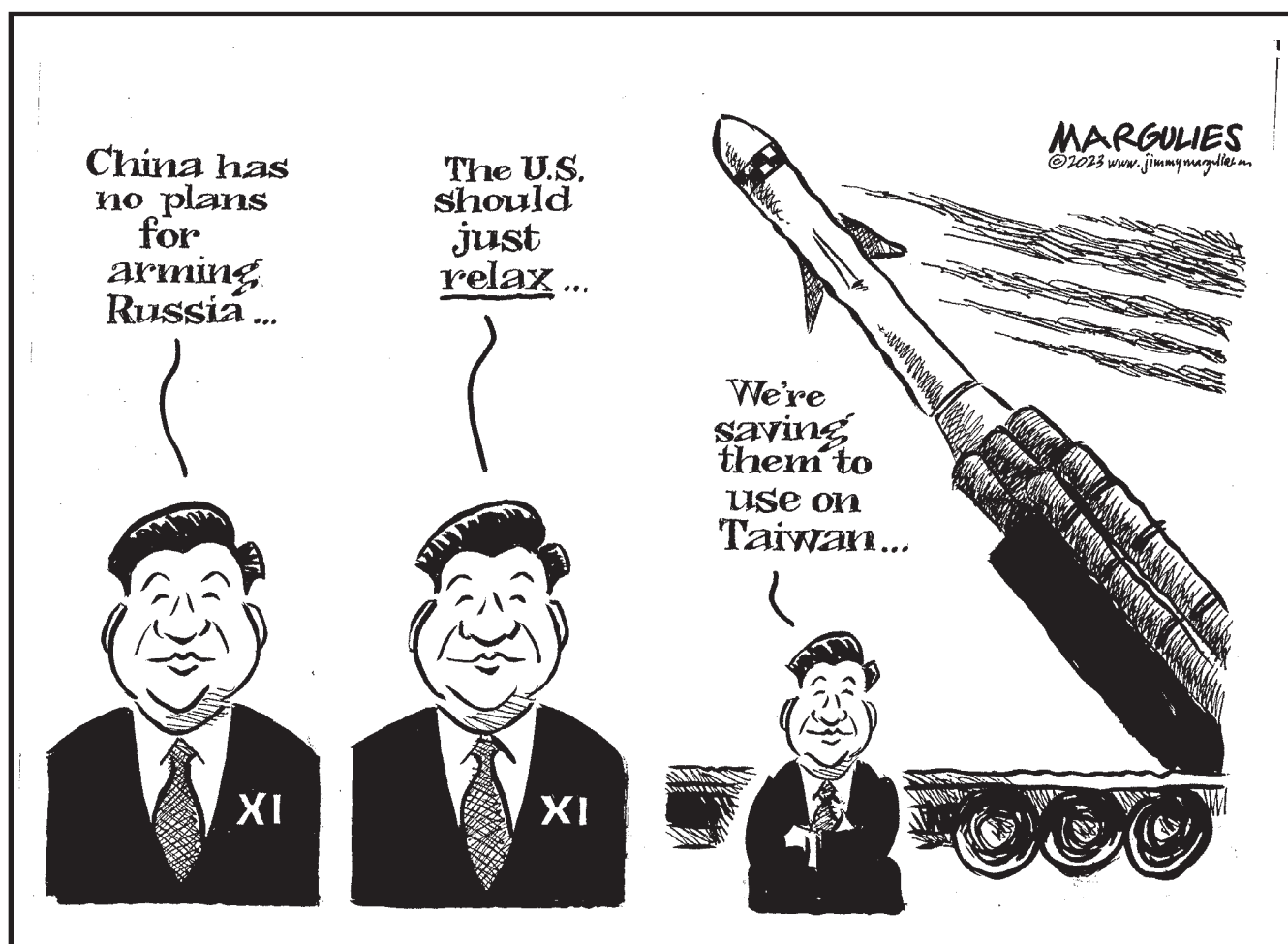
Adult caregivers are willing to look the other way because they need the financial contribution the children provide. Factory bosses look the other way because they need the cheap labor. Child labor laws are being broken everywhere, but the system seems designed to encourage all involved to circumvent the rules.

None of that should be surprising. What is shocking is the involvement of name-brand companies. Many have been caught doing this abroad, but employers tend to be far more vigilant about following child-labor laws at home. The New York Times was able to cite examples of child labor going into products sold by Ben & Jerry's ice cream, Target, Whole Foods, Ford and General Motors.

In many cases, the children are attending school during the day before immediately heading off to work. Their exhaustion makes them even more vulnerable to disfiguring workplace accidents, and their status makes it less likely that anyone will report the accidents to the proper authorities.

The crackdown, plus the embarrassment of exposure, should be enough to halt the practice. But the need to support kids in desperate circumstances won't go away.

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Safety in the skies is paramount. Don't cheapen pilot training and experience

In backrooms and dark corners, airline lobbyists, particularly the Regional Airline Association, are scurrying all over Washington, still trying to undo all the hard work that has been done to make air travel the safest form of transportation in human history. They're doing this for the usual reasons. They want to try to cheapen pilot training and levels of experience for their own financial gain and expedience. They're trying to do what is easier and cheaper for them, not what is best for passengers or crews, or for their industry.

Once again, it is necessary that those of us who deeply understand that safety really must be the priority are having to refight the same battles that we have had to fight too many times before.

This time around, the lobbyists are trying to weaken pilot experience requirements by seeking super credits for certain training experiences and, in so doing, substantially lower the number of actual pilot flying hours required. This subterfuge is trotted out as a way of achieving their goal of cheapening and quickening flight training without appearing to lower the total 1,500 hours required. But with super credits, the total flight hours would be much less, as much as 50% less. If we were trying to provide more physicians to serve rural areas, would we suggest that the answer would be to cut medical school in half from four years to two years? No! We'd say that would be crazy—because it is crazy.

When pilots have only a few hundred hours of flight experience, it means they have experienced only one cycle of the seasons as a pilot: one spring of gusty crosswinds, one summer of thunderstorms, one fall of fog and frost, and one winter of ice and snow. And if their flight training was all conducted in Florida, they would not have experienced a real winter. If their training was in Arizona, they might not ever have flown in a cloud! The first time they encounter real weather should not be when they are flying paying passengers, unwitting and unwilling test subjects.

The way pilots develop the critically important judgment they must have is through effective experience in the real world of operational flying, with its challenges and ambiguities, not in the hand-holding of the sterile training environ-

By CAPT. "SULLY" SULLENBERGER
Chicago Tribune

Capt. "Sully" Sullenberger is known for landing a US Airways plane on the Hudson River in 2009. He was most recently the U.S. ambassador and permanent representative to the International Civil Aviation Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, and is a safety expert, author and speaker on leadership and culture.



ment and not just in simulated flight.

The lobbyists are also pulling an old debater's trick, posing a false choice between quantity and quality of flight training and experience. They are trying to convince us that if the quality of training is good enough, then less of it should be required, when in reality, we can and we must have both.

On US Airways Flight 1549 on Jan. 15, 2009, First Officer Jeff Skiles, now a captain, had 20,000 hours of flight time like I did. He and I had only 208 seconds from losing thrust after being struck by a flock of birds to when we landed in the Hudson River. We did not have time to discuss what had happened and what to do about it. I had to rely on him immediately and intuitively knowing what he should do to help

me. We had to be able to collaborate wordlessly. If he had been a lot less experienced, we could not have had as good an outcome or managed to save every life.

It is not only in extreme emergencies that airline flying requires two fully trained, qualified and experienced pilots in every cockpit. At the other end of the spectrum, those same aptitudes, traits and qualities must be present as well. In fact, one of the biggest challenges in airline flying is how often it is routine, and it is in those situations that each crew of pilots must have the professionalism and diligence to avoid complacency and ensure that best practices are adhered to on every

See SAFETY on Page 9

The way pilots develop the critically important judgment they must have is through effective experience in the real world of operational flying

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Working to end violence against women in the Pacific

By JAAP VAN HIERDEN, RICHARD HOWARD,
SANAKA SAMARASINHA, AND SIMONA MARNESCU
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

A joint statement by the UN resident coordinators across the Pacific: Jaap van Hierden, Richard Howard, Sanaka Samarasingha, and Simona Marinescu, based in Micronesia, PNG, Fiji, and Samoa, respectively.

Happy International Women's Day from the United Nations teams across the Pacific!

IWD puts a spotlight on the achievements of women and girls everywhere. It is the day of recognition and celebration of the strides which have been made to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

It also provides an opportunity for self-reflection on our actions (or lack thereof) as leaders, institutions, and governments, to enhance the lives of women through opportunity, inclusion and equality.

■ In the Pacific, 2 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly by an intimate partner, more than the global average of 1 in 3;

■ Globally less than 40% of survivors of gender-based violence seek any help and it is likely that the number is greater in the Pacific due to stigma, difficulty accessing services and fear of retaliation;

■ We can't achieve all the sustainable development goals if we don't end violence against women and girls;

■ The Pacific region retains the world's lowest levels of women in parliament;

■ In most Pacific Island countries and territories, women usually perform a greater share of unpaid care and domestic work, and are overrepresented in the informal economy.

The digital revolution brings immense potential to improve social and economic outcomes in and for our societies. The power of the digital transformation at all levels can be harnessed for good to create social change, but not unless all are engaged and empowered to participate, and there are laws and regulations put in place to prevent and respond to online- and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.

Digital technologies provide new means to advocate for, defend, and exercise human rights and affect all women's rights—civil and political, as well as cultural, economic and social rights.

Recently, the UN launched a first-of-its-kind "Digital Economy Report: Pacific Edition 2022." The findings revealed that "Digital technologies can reduce gender gaps in labor force participation by making work arrangements more flexible, connecting women to work, and generating new opportunities in online work, e-commerce and the sharing economy."

The call to action born of this is clear—we must act quickly to ensure the digital divide does not deepen, and we must work together to close it entirely.

SDG 5: Gender Equality is regressing, but there is hope

Ensuring the inclusion of women and others at risk of discrimination into the technology fold results in more creative solutions and has greater potential for innovations that meet women's needs and promote gender equality. And what we know, through monitoring the implementation of SDG5 is that gender equality has not only stalled in our region, but it has regressed.

While we see hope, there is a need for all stakeholders, including the UN, governments, and development partners to expedite joint efforts.

Excluding women incurs massive costs: the UN's Gender Snapshot 2022 Report shows women's exclusion from the digital world has shaved \$1 trillion from the GDP of low- and middle-income countries in the last decade—a loss that will grow to \$1.5 trillion by 2025 without action.

In Papua New Guinea, inclusive, equal participation of women in the political and economic arena is a major challenge. Gender-based violence remains at endemic

levels and sorcery accusation-related violence killings continue.

Women in PNG are 10% less likely than men to own a mobile phone and 23% less likely to use mobile internet, limiting their participation in the digital economy, access to information and services, and exercising of human rights.

More proactive policies are needed to ensure laws, regulations and employment mechanisms are in place and being practiced. Awareness programs are also needed to combat deep-seated attitudes that discriminate against women of all ages.

In Micronesia, leaders of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati, during the 25th Micronesian Islands Forum, agreed to develop the first Micronesian Gender Equality Framework by 2025. The Framework will ensure equal and cross-sectoral representation of diverse needs and

In the Pacific, 2 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly by an intimate partner, more than the global average of 1 in 3

priorities to address inequalities and barriers to empowering women and girls in Micronesia and with impacts across the Pacific.

The UN has been supporting governments in Micronesia with gender-mainstreaming policies and actions to address gender-based violence, and discrimination through initiatives such as safe spaces, support for menstrual health management, reproductive health, and policy reforms.

In Fiji, the Pacific Conference of Churches endorsed the Gender Status Card for Churches in the Pacific: Building safe, dignified, and empowered communities in the Pacific.

A first-of-its-kind globally, it was presented to the World Council of Churches Summit in September 2022 as a model for increasing advocacy and accountability for churches to prevent and respond to violence. Five churches from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu have begun their assessments.

We have the solutions—it is now a matter of better implementation which is supported by regular monitoring and where needed, recalibration.

Ending violence against women and girls

To quote Samoa's first female prime minister, Fiame Mata'afa, "A world without violence is possible, and this moment demands unparalleled courage and joint action to make this vision a reality."

Ending all forms of violence against women and girls is fundamental to the empowerment of women.

In Samoa, our campaigns to end violence against women and girls—either jointly with governments or through exist-

ing projects—have taken national ownership. Traditional leaders and women in church and village communities are leading dialogues and actions to create violence-free homes and villages.

Policies for improved responsive services to domestic violence cases are integrated into the Law and Justice Sector 2023-2027, the Education Sector is developing policies to manage triggers of violence in schools and homes, and the Health Sector has received better facilities and medical services for victims of violence.

A first-of-its-kind Talanoa Toolkit for village-based advocates against family violence was launched in Samoa in August 2022 by the Office of the Ombudsman/National Human Rights Institutions. Written in both Samoan and English, the Talanoa Toolkit is an essential resource for advocates against family violence in communities and is being adapted and used in community awareness on family violence prevention in districts, villages, churches, schools, and families.

Samoa civil society and government ministries are strategizing on how to utilize digital mobile and web applications in order to collect and analyze gender-based violence administrative data to monitor effective and quality referrals for survivors.

Our collective responsibility to current and future generations is to limit the harms that digital technologies can bring, and to harness their enormous potential for good—with dignity, safety, and the firm protection of human rights.

When it comes bridging the digital gender divide, we must also consider online- and technology-facilitated violence experienced by women and girls. Online violence against women and girls occurs as part of a continuum that is connected to offline violence and can take many forms. These include sexual harassment, stalking, zoom bombing, intimate image abuse, and misogynistic hate speech, among many others. The impact of this type of violence to women and girls is wide, including health, wellbeing, safety, political, societal, and economic. Key global promising practices to prevent and respond to online- and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls include development and implementation of national laws and regulations, prevention strategies and response services, and data collection.

Capitalizing on the digitalization wave

It is not enough to ensure that standards are technologically sound and economically viable—that lens is not effective enough to deliver a normative framework that fully respects and enhances fundamental human rights.

The involvement of women and girls, in particular, is critical. First and foremost, they must have access to digital skills and to advanced education to master technology and use it for public good. They must also be designed with an end goal of improving lives, communities, and societies, through the rights and freedoms binding them together.

For many groups of women and girls who live in isolated nations or islands, digital platforms create the opportunity to access local, regional, and international markets and knowledge networks.

We congratulate Pacific governments on the revitalization of the "Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration 2012" and stand with Pacific leaders to support its implementation and to accelerate the achievement of gender equality commitments.

This digital revolution can vastly change the lives of the Pacific peoples, especially its women and girls, and we must get ahead of the wave before it's too late.

HARD
From Page 8

So, I am calling on everyone who flies to loudly and forthrightly tell the airline lobbyists that we're on to them and their subterfuge, and we're not having it. We are not going to allow them to turn back the clock to the days not that many years ago when there were dozens of airline crashes resulting in hundreds of deaths each year.

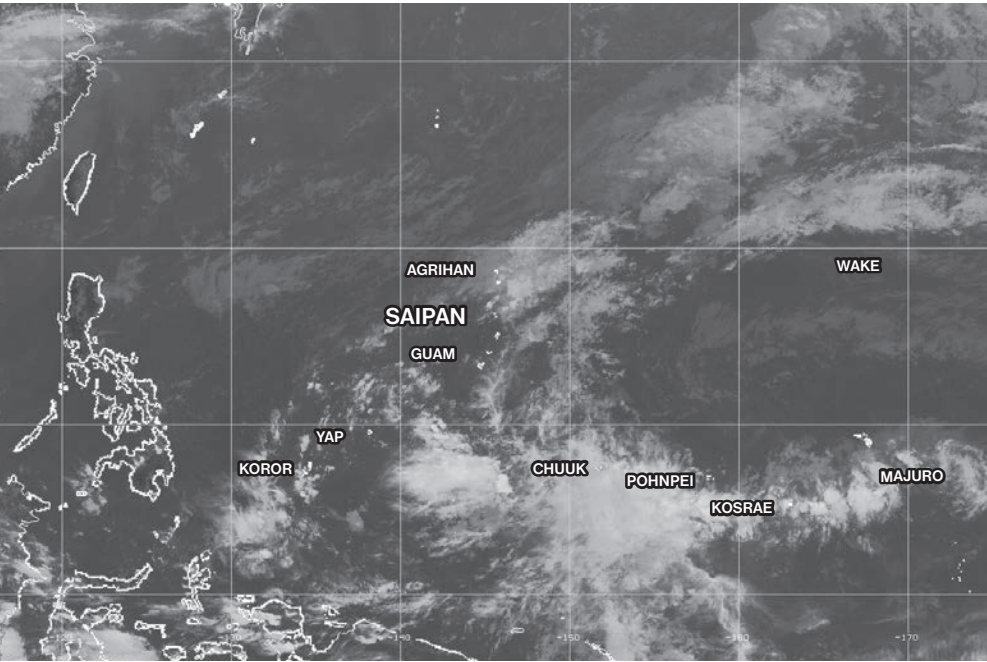
Our message is clear: Pilots must have the aptitude and the diligence to strive for excellence and become the best

of the best. And we must arm them with the knowledge, skill, experience and judgment necessary to handle whatever challenges they will face.

High levels of pilot training and experience literally make the difference between success and failure, life and death. And in safety-critical domains like aviation, everyone involved must have a deep understanding that "just good enough"—isn't.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Scattered showers. Partly sunny		Isolated showers. Mostly sunny		Partly sunny		A chance of showers. Partly sunny		Partly sunny	
87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:07 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery showed isolated showers over the Marianas this morning. A surface trough is located just west of the islands.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	6:26 PM
Monday	6:26 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	7:29 AM	7:51 PM
Friday	-	8:04 AM	8:41 PM
Saturday	-	8:40 AM	9:32 PM
Sunday	-	9:20 AM	10:26 PM
Monday	-	10:03 AM	11:24 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	75° / 61°	
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 59°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 69°	
London	Sunny	48° / 39°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°	
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 72°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	52° / 44°	
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	46° / 41°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	43° / 30°	
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	71° / 54°	
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 44°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	32° / 21°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	55° / 44°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
2:51 AM	Low Tide	0.15	
9:04 AM	High Tide	1.75	
3:15 PM	Low Tide	0.55	
8:52 PM	High Tide	1.72	

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2023

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	4, 7	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7	10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7	8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7
3:00 P.M.	3:40 P.M.	6,7	4:00 P.M.	4:40 P.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7	12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7
5:00 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6,7	6:30 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	6,7
ROTA TO GUAM			GUAM TO ROTA		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun				
				3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

3rd AEW tests refueling methods during AR 23-1

By TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Public Affairs

TINIAN, Northern Mariana Islands—Without fuel, planes don't fly.

To combat potential fuel shortage issues, fuels distribution operators assigned to the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing exercised alternate refueling methods during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 last March 2 at the Tinian International Airport.

"As the lead logistics planner for the 3rd AEW, one of the main things my team and I wanted to exercise was how do we rapidly support and sustain F-22 [Raptor] sortie generation in a contested environment with limited resources, fuel storage capability, and manning," said Capt. Alex Sparrow. "For this exercise, rather than utilizing large storage bladders and a mass amount of Airmen, we decided to only use a small team of petroleum, oils, and lubricants Airmen and R-11 vehicles by setting up a daily resupply of fuel through our own tactical airlift to defuel from a C-17 directly into the R-11s only, creating a possible real-world picture of limited storage capacity for sortie generation."

In order to refuel F-22 Raptors flying out of Tinian, C-17 Globemaster IIIs assigned to the 517th Airlift Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, flew out of Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, daily and landed on Tinian where two R-11 refueling trucks awaited to download more than 12,000 gallons of fuel.



TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Personnel assigned to the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing and 517th Airlift Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, offload more than 6,000 gallons of fuel from a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 517th AS during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 3, 2023.

"That fuel was then taken back to our parking area where we ran a full lab sample on it to include water content of the fuel, particulate, and color of the fuel, as well as differential pressure of the separators," said Tech. Sgt. Jordan Laughlin (duty title). "That allowed us to verify the fuels quality with fewer filtrations than normal ops. Now that that fuel has been cleared lab sample-wise, we will now turn around and put that fuel into F-22s."

In an Agile Combat Employment environment, resources are limited, which means that in order to still meet Air Force fuel standards, proper sampling must be accomplished to ensure the fuel going into aircraft is clean.

"Day-to-day fuel quality control operations at home station locations look very different than this. This kit and these test sets are the most agile way to verify fuel quality in an [Agile Combat Employment] environment," Laughlin said.

That fuel is also being filtered through the truck, pushed into a storage tank with a filter, and then filtered another two to three times before going into an aircraft like the F-22 Raptor.

"In this situation since we're in an ACE environment, it's important that although we're not having as many filtrations, we still want to verify the quality of that fuel to maintain [the Air Force] standard to ensure the safety of the pilots," Laughlin added.

Testing this method during AR 23-1 required higher-headquarters logistical discussions at both the Pacific Air Forces level and the Air Force Petroleum Agency.

"For this type of refueling and defueling scenario during the early stages of planning, we coordinated with PACAF A4R [POL] and AFPET to ensure we had the right mindset of what we wanted to accomplish moving forward," Sparrow explained. "When we were officially on ground here at Tinian, it became a large-scale team effort between our POL team on the ground, the aircrew, our Air Mobility Cell, and myself—communication and effort had to be seamless to ensure success."

As attention shifts from the Middle East to the Pacific, exercising ACE and logistical issues like fuel or communication in a contested, degraded environment is paramount

to mission success.

"We must be prepared for contingency operations at a certain point—which is why we are working to train and exercise our team's capabilities and establish the right tactics, techniques, and procedures to make our Airmen successful in a fight," Sparrow said. "Every day, every exercise, every mission we are learning better ways to support and sustain our sortie operations. Our main goal from a logistics standpoint for this exercise is to identify areas to improve the support and sustainment of sortie generation in a contested environment, then capture and export the data to our command and HQs and then close the gap relentlessly. We have to instill a warfighting mindset into our teams."

During AR 23-1, 3rd AEW POL airmen proved that, even without fuel bladders or storage containers, maintaining sortie generation in a potentially austere, contested, and degraded environment is possible.

"Fuel is always going to be one of the biggest issues when it comes to Agile Combat Employment, and it's so important on days like today where we're testing new ways of getting fuel," Laughlin added. "Today we proved you can do that without having a large stock on hand on a spoke. This has shown we can do it and we'll continue to build on it."



TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Tech. Sgt. Jordan Laughlin, left, the fuels distribution section chief assigned to the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing, explains fuel levels in an R-11 refueling truck to Tech. Sgt. Brandon Bryant, right, a flying crew chief with the 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at the Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 3, 2023.



TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Tech. Sgt. Jordan Laughlin, the fuels distribution section chief assigned to the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing, disassembles an in-line sampler while inspecting fuel for contaminants during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at the Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 3, 2023.



TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Tech. Sgt. Jordan Laughlin, the fuels distribution section chief assigned to the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing, relays fuel levels in an R-11 refueling truck to Airmen 1st Class Arion White and Bruce Harris, both fuels distribution operators assigned to the 3rd AEW, during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at the Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 3, 2023.



TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Staff Sgt. Tristan Beck, a flying crew chief with the 517th Airlift Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, attaches a fuel hose to a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 517th AS during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at the Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 3, 2023.



TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER

Tech. Sgt. Brandon Bryant, a flying crew chief with the 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, and Staff Sgt. Tristan Beck, a flying crew chief with the 517th Airlift Squadron, JBER, detach a fuel hose from a C-17 Globemaster III assigned to the 517th AS during Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 at the Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, March 3, 2023.



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

This ad is paid for by NMHC funds

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) had been allocated funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through Section 3205 of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2) for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) to provide homelessness assistance and supportive services.

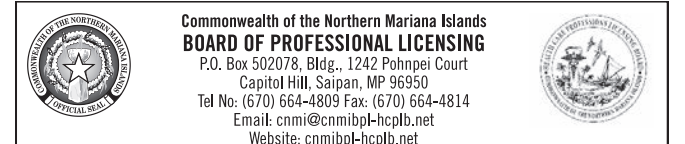
The HUD program requires the NMHC to develop an allocation plan for HOME ARP funding allocation and to solicit from the general public comments on the allocation plan.

The public hearing is scheduled for March 09, 2023, 6:00 p.m. at the NMHC Main Office Conference Room located in Garapan, Saipan. Individuals needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

Copies of the Allocation Plan is available on the NMHC website at www.nmhc.gov.net by clicking on the "HOME-ARP Plan" tab. Written comments can be submitted via email to Mr. Christopher B. Pangelinan, Mortgage & Credit Division Manager at mcdmanager@nmhc.gov.net. Written comments are due on March 21, 2023, no later than 4:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Mr. Christopher B. Pangelinan at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at mcdmanager@nmhc.gov.net.

/S/ JESSE S. PALACIOS



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on **Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room, on Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (01/26/2023)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
 - A. Welcoming of NCARB Visiting Officials
 - B. 2023 Regional Summit – March 3-4, 2023, Honolulu, HI
- VII. Director's Report
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office
 - B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - A. New Application
 - B. Renewal Applications
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting

Business

Josie's Catering is newest Kada Dia vendor

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The familiar aroma of barbecue is wafting again around Kada Dia with the recent opening of Josie's Catering.

The snack bar and catering service was opened by Josie Tengco last February and has since created a following for their one-of-a-kind sweet and savory barbecue and kapampangan dishes.

"We prepare a variety of food including barbecue, chicken inasal, silog menus, and many more. They're all lutong kapampangan!"

Kapampangan food is from the Philippines' culinary capital of Pampanga, which is famous for its fusion of Spanish, Chinese, and Filipino food.

Tengco also urges everyone to try their pork barbecue skewers and chicken inasal.

"Our bestseller so far is our own pork barbecue. We believe that our own recipe for pork barbecue has a unique and different taste. Our second bestseller is our own version of chicken inasal partnered up with sili (hot pepper) and calamansi."

Chicken inasal is the way people from Bacolod, Negros Occidental cook their lechon manok. It is chicken marinated in a mixture of calamansi, pepper, coconut vinegar, and annatto then grilled over hot



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Josie's Catering is located at the Kada Dia "Everyday Market" and is open everyday from 9am to 8pm.

coals while basted with the same chicken marinade.

Aside from offering its delicious kapampangan menu in Kada Dia, Josie's Catering also participates in popup stands in Sabalo Market, Tuesday Night Market, Night at the Museum every Friday,

and many more.

Asked why open a business during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tengco answered, "why not?"

"There is no better time than now to start a business. I happened to start my business during the pandemic because

of the time flexibility I had. It wasn't really my intention to start it during a pandemic. I've always dreamed of having my own business and I thought why not give it a try now," she said.

Tengco invited everyone in the community to sample



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Josie's Catering's chicken inasal, which is Bacolod's version of lechon manok.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Josie's Catering's one-of-a-kind pork barbecue skewers.

their unique meals.

"Josie's Catering always tries to achieve its best potential, especially when it comes to the food we sell. We make our own food with love and dedication so it's sure to be delicious!"

They also have promotions happening during the holidays so follow them on

Facebook and Instagram to be updated with their newest promotions.

Josie's Catering is located at the Kada Dia "Everyday Market" and is open everyday from 9am to 8pm. They can be reached at 670-783-7427 or follow them on Instagram @josiescatering670 and Facebook page @ Josie's Catering.

Joe Biden plans new taxes on the rich to help save Medicare

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden on Tuesday proposed new taxes on the rich to help fund Medicare, saying the plan would help to extend the insurance program's solvency by 25 years and provide a degree of middle-class stability to millions of older adults.

In his plan, Biden is overtly declaring that the wealthy ought to shoulder a heavier tax burden. His budget would draw a direct line between those new taxes and the popular health insurance program for people older than 65, essentially asking those who've fared best in the economy to subsidize the rest of the population.

Biden wants to increase the Medicare tax rate from 3.8% to 5% on income exceeding \$400,000 per year, including salaries and capital gains. The White House did not provide specific cost-saving estimates with the proposal, but the move would likely increase tax revenues by more than \$117 billion over 10 years, according to

prior estimates in February by the Tax Policy Center.

"This modest increase in Medicare contributions from those with the highest incomes will help keep the Medicare program strong for decades to come," Biden wrote in a Tuesday essay in The New York Times. He called Medicare a "rock-solid guarantee that Americans have counted on to be there for them when they retire."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., was quick to dismiss the plan, telling reporters on Tuesday that Biden's budget agenda "will not see the light of day."

More than 65 million people rely on Medicare at a cost to taxpayers of roughly \$900 billion every year. The number of Medicare enrollees is expected to continue growing as the U.S. population ages. But funding for the program is a problem with federal officials warning that, without cuts or tax increases, the Medicare fund might only be

able to pay for 90% of benefits by 2028.

Biden's suggested Medicare changes are part of a fuller budget proposal that he plans to release on Thursday in Philadelphia. Pushing the proposal through Congress will likely be difficult, with Republicans in control of the House and Democrats holding only a slim majority in the Senate.

The proposal is a direct challenge to GOP lawmakers, who argue that economic growth comes from tax cuts like those pushed through by former President Donald Trump in 2017. Those cuts disproportionately favored wealthier households and companies. They contributed to higher budget deficits, when growth failed to boom as Trump had promised and the economy was then derailed in 2020 by the coronavirus pandemic.

The conflicting worldviews on how taxes would impact the economy is part of a broader showdown. Biden and Congress need to reach a

deal to raise the government's borrowing authority at some point this summer, or else the government could default and plunge the U.S. into a debilitating recession.

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform and an advocate for the kinds of tax cuts generally favored by Republicans, said that the U.S. economy would suffer because of the president's plan.

"The Biden tax hikes will raise the cost of goods and services for everyone, and make American workers and businesses less competitive internationally and vs. China," Norquist said.

But Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, applauded the plan despite having some reservations about it.

"The president's plan would generate hundreds of billions of dollars—perhaps even approaching a trillion dollars—to strengthen Medicare," said MacGuineas, a fiscal watchdog focused on deficit reduction.

US sues to block JetBlue from buying Spirit Airlines

By DAVID KOENIG
AP AIRLINES WRITER

The Biden administration sued to block JetBlue Airways' \$3.8 billion purchase of Spirit Airlines, saying Tuesday that the deal would reduce competition and drive up air fares for consumers.

The Justice Department said the tie-up would especially hurt cost-conscious travelers who depend on Spirit to find cheaper options to JetBlue and other airlines.

Attorney General Merrick Garland held a news conference to announce the antitrust lawsuit—a sign of the importance that the administration places on stopping further consolidation in the airline industry.

"If allowed to proceed, this merger will limit choices and drive up ticket prices for passengers across the country" and "eliminate Spirit's unique and disruptive role in the industry," he said.

The Justice Depart-

ment lawsuit, filed in federal district court in Boston, stressed that the deal would mean the end of the nation's biggest "ultra-low-cost carrier." Those are airlines that generally provide the cheapest fares but also tend to charge more fees.

The Justice Department lawyers said Spirit's demise would eliminate about half of all ultra-low-cost seats in the market. It cited a Spirit estimate that average fares fall 17% when it enters a route, and a JetBlue calculation that fares rise 30% when Spirit leaves a route.

The airlines vowed to continue fighting to salvage their agreement.

JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes said the merger would boost competition by making his New York-based airline bigger and better able to go up against American, United, Delta and Southwest. He blamed the DOJ for airline consolidation.

Nation

Survivors of deadly Mexico abduction returned to US

CIUDAD VICTORIA, Mexico (AP)—A road trip to Mexico for cosmetic surgery veered violently off course when four Americans were caught in a drug cartel shootout, leaving two dead and two held captive for days in a remote region of the Gulf coast before they were rescued from a wood shack, officials said Tuesday.

Their minivan crashed and was fired on shortly after they crossed into the border city of Matamoros on Friday as drug cartel factions tore through the streets, the region's governor said. A stray bullet also killed a Mexican woman about a block and a half away.

The four Americans were hauled off in a pickup truck, and Mexican authorities frantically searched as the cartel moved them around—even taking them to a medical clinic—“to create confusion and avoid efforts to rescue them,” Tamaulip-



A Red Cross worker closes the door of an ambulance carrying two Americans found alive after their abduction in Mexico last week, in Matamoros, Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

as Gov. Américo Villarreal said.

They were found Tuesday in a wooden shack, guarded by a man who was arrested, in a rural

area east of Matamoros called Ejido Tecolote on the way to the Gulf called “Bagdad Beach,” according to the state’s chief prosecutor, Irving Barrios.

The surviving Americans were whisked back to U.S. soil on Tuesday in Brownsville, the southernmost tip of Texas and just across the border from Matamoros. The convoy of ambulances and SUVs was escorted by Mexican military Humvees and National Guard trucks with mounted machine guns.

A relative of one of the victims said Monday that the four had traveled together from the Carolinas so one of them could get a tummy tuck surgery from a doctor in Matamoros.

The governor said the wounded American, Eric Williams, had been shot in the left leg and the injury was not life threatening.

“It’s quite a relief,” said Robert Williams, 38-year-old Eric’s brother, reached by phone Tuesday in North Carolina. “I look forward to seeing him again and actually being able to talk to him.”

Robert Williams was not sure if the other survivor, Latavia Burgess, was the one seeking the surgery.

The survivors were taken to Valley Regional Medical Center with an FBI escort, the Brownsville Herald reported. A spokesperson for the hospital referred all in-

quiries to the FBI.

The two dead—Shaeed Woodard, age 33, and Zindell Brown, in his mid-20s—will be turned over to U.S. authorities following forensic work at the Matamoros morgue, the governor said.

Video and photographs taken during and immediately after Friday’s abduction show the Americans’ white minivan sitting beside another vehicle, with at least one bullet hole in the driver’s side window. A witness said the two vehicles had collided. Almost immediately, several men with tactical vests and assault rifles arrived in another vehicle to surround the scene.

The Mexican authorities’ hypothesis is “that it was confusion, not a direct attack,” the state prosecutor said.

The gunmen walked one of the Americans into the bed of a white pickup, then dragged and loaded up the three others. Terrified civilian motorists sat silently in their cars, hoping not to draw attention. Two of the victims appeared to be motionless.

The shootings illustrate the terror that has prevailed for years in Matamoros, a city dominated by factions of the powerful Gulf drug cartel who often fight among themselves. Amid the violence, thousands of Mexicans have disappeared in Tamaulipas state alone.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said the people responsible would be punished. He referenced arrests

in the 2019 killings of nine U.S.-Mexican dual citizens in Sonora near the U.S. border.

López Obrador complained about the U.S. media’s coverage of the missing Americans, accusing them of sensationalism. He said that when Mexicans are killed, the media “go quiet like mummies.”

“We really regret that this happens in our country,” he said, adding that the U.S. government has every right to be upset by the violence.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland put blame for the deaths squarely on the drug cartels.

“The DEA and the FBI are doing everything possible to dismantle and disrupt and ultimately prosecute the leaders of the cartels and the entire networks that they depend on” Garland said.

The FBI had offered a \$50,000 reward for the victims’ return and the arrest of the abductors.

Robert Williams said in a telephone interview that he and his brother Eric are from South Carolina but now live in the Winston-Salem area of North Carolina.

Williams described his brother as “easygoing” and “fun-spirited.”

He didn’t know his brother was traveling to Mexico until after the abduction hit the news. But from looking at his brother’s Facebook posts, he thinks his brother did not consider the trip dangerous.

IN PIVOT ON DC CRIME LAW

Biden upends politics, precedent

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden’s support of a Republican resolution to block new District of Columbia crime laws has split members of his own party amid rising concerns about crime in the nation’s capital and other cities.

The GOP-led disapproval resolution is expected to easily pass the Senate on Wednesday with ample Democratic support. But most House Democrats voted against it last month, arguing as they have for many years that the District of Columbia should be able to govern itself.

The Democratic support for the resolution, which comes as murders have spiked over a number of years in D.C., is a shift for Biden and his party and could allow Congress to nullify the city’s laws through the disapproval process for the first time in more than three decades.

A look at the politics and precedent of Wednesday’s Senate vote on D.C. crime laws:

carjacking and robbery.

Mayor Muriel Bowser vetoed the overhaul in January, writing in a letter that she had “very significant concerns” about some of the bill’s proposals. She later proposed changes after the council overrode her veto. “Anytime there’s a policy that reduces penalties, I think it sends the wrong message,” she said.

In 2022, there were 203 homicides in the district, about a 10% drop after years of steady increases. Homicides in the city had risen for four years straight, and the 2021 murder count of 227 was the highest since 2003. The city’s police union said in a statement that changes would “lead to violent crime rates exploding even more than they already have.”

Washington’s criminal code hasn’t been updated substantially since it was first drafted in 1901, and criminal justice experts say that Black people have been disproportionately affected by the criminal laws, similar to many other cities.

THE DISTRICT’S NEW LAWS

The overhaul of D.C.’s criminal code was approved late last year by the D.C. Council after years of failed attempts. It would redefine crimes, change criminal justice policies and rework how sentences should be handed down after convictions. It would also do away with mandatory minimum sentences for many crimes and reduce the maximum penalties for burglary,

GOP PUSHBACK TURNS BIPARTISAN

The new criminal code is set to take effect in October 2025. But to become law, it has to survive a 60-day review period during which Congress and the president could override it, thanks to a 1970s-era law called the Home Rule Act. Though Congress has imposed various limits on D.C. through spending bills over the years, the formal disapproval process hasn’t been used since 1991.

US to relax COVID testing rules for travelers from China

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration is preparing to relax COVID-19 testing restrictions for travelers from China as soon as Friday, according to two people familiar with the decision.

The people, who were not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the administration has decided to roll back the testing requirements as cases, hospitalizations and deaths are declining in China and the U.S. has gathered better information about the surge.

The restrictions were put in place on Dec. 28 and took effect on Jan. 5 amid a surge in infections in China after the nation sharply eased pandemic restrictions and as U.S. health officials expressed concerns that their Chinese counterparts were not being truthful to the world about the true number of infections and deaths. The Washington Post was first to report on Tuesday about the expected administra-

tion move.

At the time, U.S. officials also said the restriction was necessary to protect U.S. citizens and communities because there was a lack of transparency from the Chinese government about the size of the surge or the variants that were circulating within China.

As part of its response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention earlier this year expanded genomic surveillance at several U.S. airports, collecting voluntary samples from passengers aboard hundreds of weekly flights from China, and the testing of wastewater aboard airplanes. The Traveler-based Genomic Surveillance Program will continue to monitor travelers from China and more than 30 other countries.

The rules imposed in January require travelers to the U.S. from China, Hong Kong and Macau to take a COVID-19 test no more than two days before travel and provide a negative test before boarding

their flight. The testing applies to anyone 2 years and older, including U.S. citizens.

It also applied to people traveling from China via a third country and to people connecting through the U.S. as they go on to other destinations. Anyone testing positive more than 10 days before the flight can provide documentation showing they’ve recovered from COVID-19 instead of a negative test result.

It has been left to the airlines to confirm negative tests and documentation of recovery before passengers board.

China saw infections and deaths surge after it eased back from its “zero COVID” strategy in early December after rare public protests against a policy that confined millions of people to their homes and sparked protests and demands for President Xi Jinping to resign.

But as China eased its strict rules, infections and deaths surged, and parts of the country for weeks saw their hospitals overwhelmed by infected

patients looking for help. Still, the Chinese government has been slow to release data on the number of deaths and infections.

The U.S. decision to lift restrictions comes at a moment when U.S.-China relations are strained. Biden ordered a Chinese spy balloon shot down last month after it traversed the continental United States. The Biden administration has also publicized U.S. intelligence findings that raise concern Beijing is weighing providing Russia weaponry for its ongoing war on Ukraine.

Earlier Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang warned that Beijing and Washington were headed for “conflict and confrontation” if the U.S. doesn’t change course.

Qin’s comments came a day after Xi in an unusually pointed speech said that “Western countries led by the United States have implemented all-round containment, encirclement and suppression of China.”

Asia

UNLESS US CHANGES COURSE

Chinese minister warns of conflict

BEIJING (AP)—China's foreign minister has warned Washington of "conflict and confrontation" if it fails to change course in relations with Beijing, striking a combative tone amid conflicts over Taiwan, COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Qin Gang's language appeared to defy hopes China's might abandon confrontational "wolf warrior" rhetoric. It followed an accusation by Chinese leader Xi Jinping that Western governments led by the United States were trying to encircle and suppress China.

Washington's China policy has "entirely deviated from the rational and sound track," Qin said at a news conference Tuesday during annual meeting of China's ceremonial legislature.

China's relations with Washington and Japan, India and other Asian neighbors have soured as Xi's government has pursued assertive policies abroad.

"If the United States does not hit the brake, but continues to speed down the wrong path, no amount of guardrails can prevent derailing and there surely will be conflict and confrontation," Qin said in his first news conference since taking up his post last year. "Such competition is a reckless gamble, with the stakes being the fundamental interests of the two peoples and even the future of humanity."

On Monday, Xi accused Washington of hurting China's development.

"Western countries led by the United States have implemented all-round containment, encirclement and suppression of China, which has brought unprecedented grave challenges to our nation's development," Xi was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

In the face of that, China must "remain calm, maintain concentration, strive for progress while maintaining stability, take active actions, unite as one and dare to fight," he said.

A State Department spokesman, Ned Price, said Washington wants to "coexist responsibly" in a global trade and political system and denied the U.S. government wants to suppress China.

"This is not about containing China. This is not about suppressing China. This is not about holding China back," Price said in Washington. "We want to have that constructive competition that is fair" and "doesn't veer into that conflict."

U.S. officials are increasingly worried about China's goals and the possibility of war over Taiwan, the self-ruled island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory. Many in Washington have called for the U.S. government to make a bigger effort to counter Chinese influence abroad.

Concerns about Chinese spying on the U.S. and Beijing's influence campaigns there have drawn particular concern.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled a planned visit to Beijing after Washington shot down a Chinese balloon suspected of being used for spying on U.S. territory. Its electronics and optical equipment are being analyzed by the FBI.

Then last week, Beijing reacted with indignation when U.S. officials raised the issue again of whether the COVID-19 outbreak that first was detected in southern China in late 2019 began with a leak from a Chinese laboratory. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the U.S. of "politicizing the issue" in an attempt to discredit China.

The two countries have

traded angry words over Taiwan as Xi's government tried to intimidate the island by firing missiles into the sea and flying fighter planes nearby.

Qin was ambassador to Washington until last year and in a previous stint as Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman was known for cutting condemnation of foreign critics.

On Tuesday, he criticized Washington for shooting down the balloon. He repeated claims that its appearance in U.S. skies was an accident.

"In this case the United States' perception and views of China are seriously distorted. It regards China as its primary rival and the most consequential geopolitical challenge," Qin said. "This is like the first button in a shirt being put wrong and the result is that the U.S.-China policy has entirely deviated from the rational and sound track."

Qin called Taiwan the first "red line" that must not be crossed.

China and Taiwan split in 1949 after a civil war. The mainland's Communist Party says the island is obliged to unite with China, by force if necessary.

Washington doesn't public support either unification or formal independence for Taiwan but is obligated by federal law to see that the island has the means to defend itself.

"The U.S. has unshakable responsibility for causing the Taiwan question," Qin said.

He accused the U.S. government of "disrespecting China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," by offering the island political backing and furnishing it with weapons in response to Beijing's threat to use force to bring it under Chinese control.

"Why does the U.S. ask China not to provide weapons to Russia, while it keeps selling arms to Taiwan?" Qin asked.

Bank governor sent a letter of intent to the International Monetary Fund for the final approval. "Now we have done our part, and I expect the IMF will do its share by the end of this month, by the third or fourth week," Wickremesinghe said.

Thai man gets 2-year term for calendar said to mock king

BANGKOK (AP)—A Thai man was sentenced to two years in prison Tuesday for selling calendars featuring satirical

cartoons of yellow ducks that a court said mocked the country's monarch, a legal aid group said. Bangkok's Criminal Court ruled that the calendar for 2021 containing pictures of yellow ducks in poses resembled and ridiculed Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn, diminishing his reputation, the group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said. Yellow rubber ducks were at one point a tongue-in-cheek symbol of Thailand's pro-democracy protest movement.

World

Battle for Bakhmut taking center stage in Ukraine war



AP
Video footage of Bakhmut shot from the air with a drone for The Associated Press on Monday, Feb. 13, 2023,

BAKHMUT, Ukraine (AP)—The six-month battle for the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut has been the longest and bloodiest fight of the war so far.

Little known outside Ukraine before the Russian invasion, Bakhmut has become a symbol of the country's fortitude and perseverance in the face of the Kremlin's onslaught.

The Ukrainian leadership vowed again this week to keep defending the city, but some observers have warned that holding on to it could be too dangerous and costly.

Here is a look at Bakhmut, the battle and its possible consequences.

WHAT KIND OF CITY IS BAKHMUT?

Bakhmut, which had a pre-war population of more than 70,000, was an important center for salt and gypsum mining in the Donetsk region of the country's industrial heartland known as the Donbas.

The city was also known for its sparkling wine production in historic underground caves. Its broad tree-lined avenues, lush parks and stately downtown with imposing late 19th century buildings made it a popular tourist attraction.

When a separatist rebellion engulfed the Donbas in April 2014, weeks after Moscow's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, Russia-backed separatists won control of the city but lost it a few months later.

HOW DID THE FIGHTING EVOLVE?

Russian troops first attempted to recapture Bakhmut in early August but were pushed back.

The fighting abated in the following months as the Russian military faced Ukrainian counteroffensives in the east and the south, but it resumed at full pace late last year. In January, the Russians captured the salt-mining town of Soledar just a few kilometers (miles) north of Bakhmut and advanced to the city's suburbs.

The relentless Russian bombardment has reduced Bakhmut to a smoldering wasteland with few buildings still standing. Russian and Ukrainian soldiers have fought ferocious house-to-house battles in the ruins.

Soldiers from Russia's private Wagner Group contractor have spearheaded the offensive, marching on "the corpses of their own troops" as Ukrainian officials put it. By the end of February, the Russians approached the only highway leading out of the city and targeted it with artillery, forcing Ukrainian defenders to rely increasingly on country roads, which are hard to use before the ground dries.

WHAT DO UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN OFFICIALS SAY ABOUT THE BATTLE?

Ukrainian authorities have hailed the city as the invincible "fortress Bakhmut" that has destroyed waves of Russian assaults.

As Russian pincers were closing on the city, a presidential aide warned last week that the military could "strategically pull back" if needed. But on Monday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his top generals decided that the army will keep defending Bakhmut and reinforce its troops there.

For the Kremlin, capturing Bakhmut is essential for achieving its stated goal of taking control the entire

Donetsk, one of the four Ukrainian regions that Moscow illegally annexed in September.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Tuesday that the seizure of Bakhmut would allow Russia to press its offensive deeper into the region.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the rogue millionaire who owns the Wagner Group, charged that his forces were destroying the best Ukrainian units in Bakhmut to prevent them from launching attacks elsewhere.

At the same time, he harshly criticized the Russian Defense Ministry for failing to provide Wagner with ammunition in comments that reflected his longtime tensions with the top military brass and exposed problems that could slow down the Russian offensive.

WHAT DO EXPERTS SAY?

Military experts note that Ukraine has turned Bakhmut into a meat grinder for Russia's most capable forces.

"It has achieved its aim as effectively being the anvil on which so many Russian lives have been broken," Lord Richard Dannatt, the former chief of the general staff of the British armed forces, said on Sky News.

Phillips P. O'Brien, professor of strategic studies at the University of St Andrews, said the battle for Bakhmut "confirms that the Russian army is still struggling with basic operations."

He noted that the Kremlin's continuing emphasis on land grabs regardless of losses means that "Russian strategic aims are bleeding the Russian army greatly."

ASIAN BRIEFS

Sri Lanka leader says IMF deal imminent after China's pledge

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lanka's president said Tuesday that China has given crucial debt restructuring assurances that mean the bankrupt Indian Ocean nation could get its \$2.9 billion bailout package approved soon. President Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament that a letter from China's EXIM bank with the necessary assurances was received on Monday night and immediately he and the Central

Life & Style

Pritzker Prize awarded to British architect Chipperfield

By JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer

The Pritzker Architecture Prize—the highest honor in the field—has been awarded to British architect and urban planner David Alan Chipperfield, hailed on Tuesday for “a commitment to an architecture of understated but transformative civic presence.”

Organizers called Chipperfield’s work—more than 100 projects over four decades ranging from cultural, civic and academic buildings to urban planning to residences, and including a recent addition to

Berlin’s famed Museum Island complex—“subtle yet powerful, subdued yet elegant.”

“He is a prolific architect who is radical in his restraint,” they said in a statement announcing the 2023 winner, “demonstrating his reverence for history and culture while honoring the preexisting built and natural environments.” They cited his “timeless modern design that confronts climate urgencies, transforms social relationships and reinvigorates cities.”

And they noted his commitment to society and the envi-

ronment over chasing trends.

“He is assured without hubris, consistently avoiding trendiness to confront and sustain the connections between tradition and innovation, serving history and humanity,” said Tom Pritzker, chairman of the Hyatt Foundation, which sponsors the award.

Based in London, with additional offices in four other countries, Chipperfield has worked across Asia and Europe and also in U.S. cities like Davenport, Iowa, and Anchorage, Alaska.



Chipperfield

In 2019, the city of Berlin introduced the James Simon Gallery, a new gateway designed by Chipperfield to the Museum Island complex and seen as a key moment in efforts to renovate the five-museum site that houses treasures such as Babylon’s Ishtar Gate and a famed bust of Egyptian Queen Nefertiti.

Pritzker Prize organizers hailed the design, including its “commanding, though discreet, colonnades” and

the way it “enables generous views from within and beyond, even through to adjacent buildings and the surrounding urban landscape.”

Ten years earlier, in 2009, Chipperfield completed a major restoration and reinvention of the Neues Museum at the complex, a building constructed in the mid-19th century and largely destroyed during World War II.

In an interview, Chipper-

field, 69, recalled the project as an intense experience.

“It was not only a museum, it was part of the fabric, the heritage of the city in its good and worst ways,” he told The Associated Press on Monday, speaking from Berlin. “It was a wonderful 19th-century building, but substantially destroyed by the traumatic events of the Second World War and then neglected because of the post-war division of the city.

Roman shrine uncovered beneath graveyard in central England

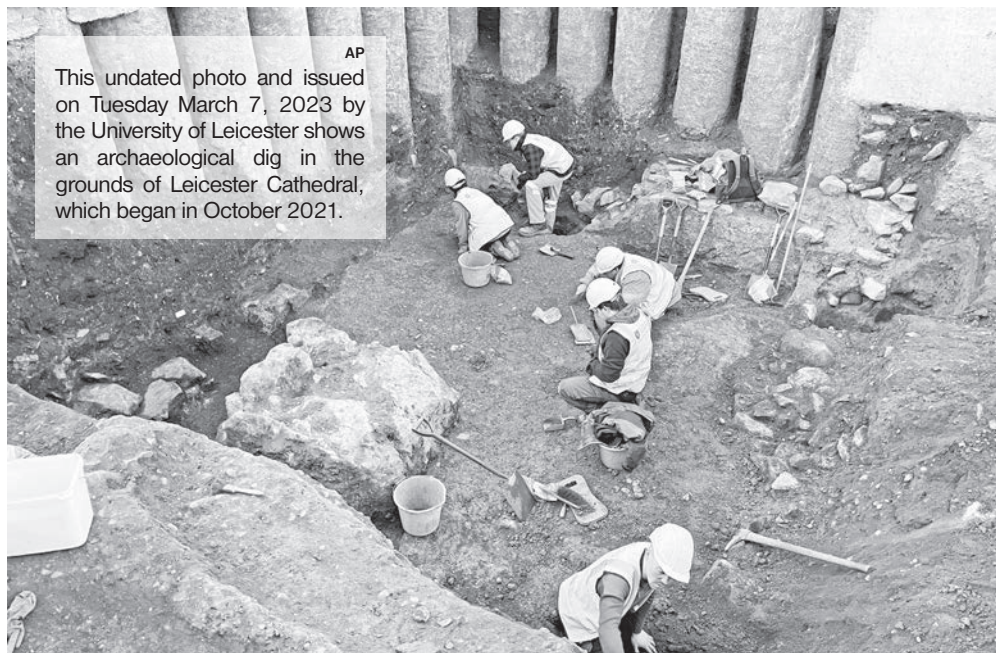
LONDON (AP)—Archaeologists have uncovered what they believe to be a Roman shrine beneath a former graveyard in the grounds of a cathedral in central England.

Experts from the University of Leicester said Tuesday that they found what appears to be the cellar of a Roman building and a fragment of a 1,800-year-old altar stone during excavations in the grounds of Leicester Cathedral.

“There’s always been this folk tale that there was a Roman temple underneath the cathedral,” said Mathew Morris, excavation director for the University of Leicester’s Archaeological Services.

“Until now, there’s been no way of being able to say whether there was or not,” he added, but the new findings reveal that “there is definitely a Roman place of worship underneath the cathedral.”

Morris and his team believe the cellar, nearly 10 feet



AP
This undated photo and issued on Tuesday March 7, 2023 by the University of Leicester shows an archaeological dig in the grounds of Leicester Cathedral, which began in October 2021.

(3 meters) below the ground, was built in the second century. Several pieces of Roman pottery and coins were also found at the site.

The Romans built a fort around A.D. 50 in Leicester, a settlement known as Ratae Corieltauvorum.

The dig was part of a multi-million-pound project to restore Leicester Cathedral, thought to have first been built in the 11th century. The cathedral is now home to the tomb of Richard III, England’s last Plantagenet king and the last English

monarch to have died in battle. He died in 1485.

The University of Leicester’s archaeological team found the medieval king’s remains a decade ago in a Leicester city center parking lot. He was reinterred in the cathedral in 2015.

Toni Morrison honored with new stamp

PRINCETON, N.J.

(AP)—Nobel laureate

Toni Morrison is now forever immortalized on a stamp honoring the prolific writer, editor, scholar and mentor that was unveiled Tuesday morning in

a tribute at Princeton University, where she taught for almost two decades.

Guest speakers, some who had close personal relationships with Morrison and spoke over Zoom, included former President Barack Obama, Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey, as well as the Librarian of Congress, Carla Hayden.

The monthslong series of events are paying tribute to Morrison, who died in 2019 at age 88. The tribute opened with a recording of Morrison’s voice playing in the auditorium, reciting a passage on Harlem from her 1992 novel “Jazz”: “Nobody says it’s pretty here; nobody says it’s easy either. What it is is decisive, and if you pay attention to the street plans, all



Morrison

laid out, the City can’t hurt you.”

Later, an all-Black acapella group sang the popular hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” which is known as the Black national anthem.

The dedication was made by Michael Cadden, a longtime Princeton lecturer who co-taught courses with Morrison, and formerly served as chair of the Lewis Center of the Arts.

Cadden introduced Pritha Mehra, the chief information officer and executive vice president of the United States Postal Service, who said that the postal service is proud to commemorate Morrison.

“Our new stamp will be seen by millions, and forever remind us of the power of her words and the ideas she brought to the world,” Mehra said.

Photographer Deborah Feingold, whose portrait of Morrison taken for Time magazine’s Jan. 19, 1998 cover appears on the stamp, also spoke at the event.

Woman reconsiders pledge made to ailing boyfriend

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend of four years has been diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE. We’re both only 51. Obviously, we face a grim reality. He has already tried once to end our relationship to spare me the inevitable, but I convinced him I’m in it to the bitter end.

Now he’s accusing his family (and me) of being interested only in interrogating him about his conversations with others regarding his condition. He has cut off contact for the last few days while he reevaluates all of his relationships. I’m respecting his wishes, which is so hard since we have never gone a day without speaking.

My problem is the relief I feel. There are no meltdowns, no angry outbursts, no having to tiptoe around our conversations. Until now, I didn’t realize the pressure I was under. My dilemma now is: If he wishes to continue our relationship, should I? His anger is scaring me, and he’s losing himself so quickly. He’s not the man I grew to love.

I haven’t taken vows, but I don’t feel right ducking out when he needs someone the most. I’m confused about what to do. Any helpful advice would be greatly appreciated.

TORN IN TWO IN THE SOUTH

DEAR TORN: The relationship you shared with your boyfriend is essentially over. You stated that his illness is

turning him into someone else. You are not his wife, and you are not responsible for his well-being. Talk with his family and suggest they create a long-term plan for his care. He is going to need one. Because the emotion you are feeling now is primarily one of relief, allow this man to end the relationship if that is what he wants to do.

◆◆◆◆

DEAR ABBY: My daughter-in-law just became a vegetarian and she seems to think pasta, cheese and fruit are all that is needed. She and my son have a 1-year-old and insist she be a vegetarian too. I’m worried because I feel like the protein is missing. There’s no effort to calculate protein levels, and now she has decided to eliminate cow’s milk, although ice cream and whipped cream seem to be OK. I’ve encouraged my son to add soy and other beans to the baby’s diet. He does all the cooking and seems a bit overwhelmed.

I don’t live close, or I would happily prepare some meals for them. Is there anything I can do to encourage them to plan the meals more carefully and get the proper protein-to-carb ratio? I’m worried they may be cheating my grandbaby of the needed building blocks of health. I’ve kept my mouth shut so far, but I’m really worried. Help!

HEALTHY GRANDMA IN FLORIDA

DEAR GRANDMA: A vegetarian diet can be a

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



healthy one for little ones. Because you have concerns, encourage your son and daughter-in-law to discuss this with their child’s pediatrician. Many books have been written about healthy vegetarian diets, and there is a world of information about it on the internet. Explore the subject for your own peace of mind, and encourage them to do the same.

◆◆◆◆

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

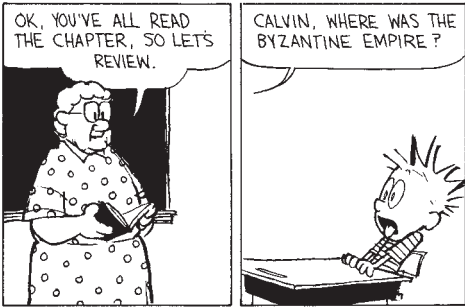
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

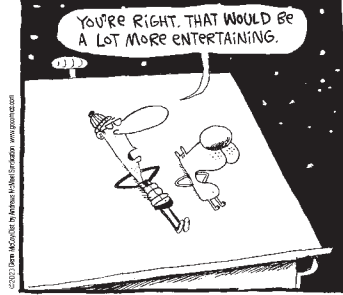
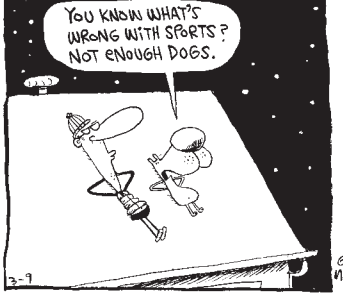
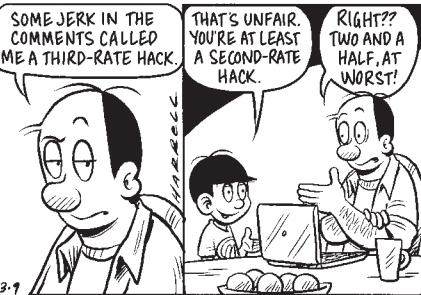


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Film buff's website
5 Search for gold
8 IRS employees
12 Lass
13 Docs' bloc
14 Handful of hair
15 Popular layered cookie
16 "Blue Bloods" extra
17 Play opener
18 Overhaul
20 Moped
22 "Not impressed"
23 Six, in Sicily
24 Priestly vestments
27 Fortify
32 Aunt, in Mexico
33 Football filler
34 Charged bit
35 Abolitionist Mott

DOWN

1 Inventory
2 Bog
3 Sketched
4 Bursts into
5 Carry a gun
6 Latin 101 word
7 Siestas
8 Alpine home
9 Give up
10 Pot starter
11 Lose traction
19 Concerning
21 Dos Passos trilogy
24 Pac. counterpart
25 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
26 Hiker's burden
28 Roman 1002
29 "The Breakfast Club" clique
30 Singer Rawls
31 Chang's brother
36 Comic Dangerfield
37 Rock producer Brian
38 Pitcher known as "Tom Terrific"
41 Either mate
42 Actress Hatcher
43 "The Good Earth" heroine
44 Pace
46 Richard of "Chicago"
47 — Major
48 Kept tabs on
51 Reply (Abbr.)

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-9

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Bow Wow, 36; Brittany Snow, 37; Matthew Gray Gubler, 43; Juliette Binoche, 59.

Happy Birthday: Take pride in what you do, and the response you get will help you expand your interests. Gravitate toward positive people and suggestions that lead to lifestyle changes that save money and encourage you to distance yourself from complex partnerships. Take a position of leadership, and keep the momentum flowing throughout the year. Control emotional mishaps and exaggeration. Your numbers are 13, 18, 27, 34, 36, 42, 62.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Make your intentions clear, and you'll get the answers you need to carry on with your plans. Changing your location or trying something new will lead to new friendships and suggestions that can help you improve your lifestyle. Make partnerships your priority. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Let your performance be your marketing tool. The more precise you are, the better. Take a simple path that is easy for others to follow, and you'll get the backup you require to finish what you start. Encouragement will pay off. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Judge situations honestly and make your move. Understanding the ins and outs of what you are dealing with and the personalities involved will make your job easier. Use your resources to make judgment calls that show your leadership ability. Love is featured. ****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Clear your head and rethink your plans. Don't confuse personal feelings with professional

needs. Call on someone who can offer a different perspective on a situation and your options will become apparent. Choose personal improvement in order to maintain your reputation. **

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your popularity will grow if you share your expertise and help those in dire need by offering what you can. Show how much you care, and the response you receive will tell you what to expect in return. ****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take the high road, regardless of how others react. Courage, integrity and the truth will carry you to the winner's circle. A partnership will need your attention, but don't let it ruin your reputation. Don't pay for someone else's mistake. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't give in to emotional manipulation. Stand your ground, follow your heart and refuse to let anyone take advantage of you. Use your imagination. Plan to do something energetic with someone you love. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You'll have trouble differentiating between what you want, what you can do and what you can have. By taking the path that leads to the least resistance, you'll sidestep getting trapped doing too much for others at the expense of not doing it for yourself. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't slow down to gawk or argue over something inconsequential. Time will heal all wounds if you are patient. Carry on and make the most of your time by concentrating on what you can achieve. Home improvement and romance are favored. ****

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take on challenges, seize the moment and show everyone what you can do. Stick to a plan, and steer clear of anyone trying to get you to extend yourself beyond your comfort zone. Don't let an emotional incident interfere with your progress. **

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take a moment to put everything in its place. Preparation will make the difference between easy success and possible failure. By reconnecting with someone you miss, something good will transpire. Live in the moment and leave nothing undone, and greater prosperity will be yours. ****

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A secretive approach to your actions will help bring about the changes you want and receive the least amount of interference. Having greater insight will result in finding the confidence to do as you see fit. Avoid overindulgence. ***

Birthday Baby: You are persuasive, original and inspirational. You are aggressive and possessive.

☺: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☹: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☹☹: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☹☹☹: Aim high; start new projects. ☹☹☹☹: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	7					3	9		
1		9	3				4		
5	3				7		1		
7		4	5	1		2		6	
8						3	4		9
	8		7	3					
	1		4		5				3
6			1	8					

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	2	9	7	8	4	6	1	5
7	4	5	2	6	1	8	9	3
1	6	8	5	3	9	7	2	4
8	3	7	4	9	6	1	5	2
2	9	6	3	1	5	4	7	8
4	5	1	8	2	7	3	6	9
9	7	4	6	5	3	2	8	1
6	1	2	9	4	8	5	3	7
5	8	3	1	7	2	9	4	6

Difficulty: ★★★ 3-9
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STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BARBARA WALTERS (1929-2022) Solution: 12 letters

R P E N I L E U Q C A J T S T
O R R A A U D I T I O N E W E
T E S I U O L I W E I V E H T
A S W E I V R E T N I N H D A
E I O F A Y M M E S T E (A) (B) (C)
R D H H A W L C U Y V S R P O
C E S D O S C A L T E D V D R I V
K N O M C L C W N D R I D
O T E O L X E I A E E A E M A
O N O A E N N N N B M W S E R
B P W T T G C O U A A A B T O
D B L Y N H T G F T T B A I B
E A Z E O S E A I E K I M M E
R B W R O E M R E A S O N E R
N S G B L E G E N D A R Y G T

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Yesterday's Answer: Flows
The NEW Volume 70 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Davis' 30 points, 22 rebounds lead Lakers past Grizzlies



LOS ANGELES (AP)—Anthony Davis had 30 points and 22 rebounds, Dennis Schröder added 17 points and nine assists and the Los Angeles Lakers moved into ninth place in the Western Conference with a 112-103 victory over the Memphis Grizzlies on Tuesday night.

Rui Hachimura and Austin Reaves scored 17 points apiece in the sixth win in eight games for the Lakers, who are surging since the trade deadline despite missing LeBron James and D'Angelo Russell to injury.

Jaren Jackson scored 26 points and Tyus Jones had 16 for the Grizzlies, who dropped to 0-2 without Ja Morant with their third straight loss overall.

Morant missed his second straight game since the Memphis superstar apparently took a gun into a strip club on the road and then flaunted it on social media last weekend. The two-time All-Star and the Grizzlies' leading scorer is the target of two NBA investigations and a reported probe by Denver police.

HORNETS 112, KNICKS 105

NEW YORK (AP)—Kelly Oubre Jr. scored 27 points, Terry Rozier added 25 and Charlotte snapped New York's nine-game winning streak.

Gordon Hayward had 23 points, nine rebounds and eight assists, and made the



Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis (3) goes up for a basket past Memphis Grizzlies' Tyus Jones (21) and Dillon Brooks (24) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, March 7, 2023, in Los Angeles.

tiebreaking basket with 1:50 remaining as the Hornets won for the first time in four games since point guard LaMelo Ball's broken ankle that required surgery.

They trailed by 16 at half-time and were still down nine midway through the fourth quarter before surging past a Knicks team that appeared to lack energy, two nights after needing two overtimes to win in Boston.

RJ Barrett scored 27 points for the Knicks, who were trying for their first 10-game winning streak since a 13-game run late in the 2012-13 season. Julius Randle scored 16 points but shot just 5 for 17 from the field.

BUCKS 134, MAGIC 123

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Brook Lopez scored 26

points, Khris Middleton and Jevon Carter each added 24 points and Milwaukee beat Orlando for its 18th win in 19 games.

Bobby Portis Jr. had 16 points and 11 rebounds and Jae Crowder added 15 points for the Bucks, who shot 59% and ran their winning streak against the Magic to 14 games.

The Bucks played without All-Stars Giannis Antetokounmpo (non-COVID-19 illness) and Jrue Holiday (sore neck).

Cole Anthony led the Magic with 23 points. Franz Wagner added 21 points and Paolo Banchero had 20 points and five rebounds.

MAVERICKS 120, JAZZ 116

DALLAS (AP)—Kyrie Irving hit a clutch 3-pointer

and scored 17 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter, and Luka Doncic added 29 points as Dallas beat short-handed Utah.

Utah trailed 118-115 with 3.7 seconds to play when Talen Horton-Tucker was fouled and sent to the line for two shots. After sinking the first, his intentional miss slammed directly off the backboard and didn't hit the rim, giving Dallas possession.

Tim Hardaway Jr. added 24 points off the bench, including 7-for-9 shooting from beyond the arc as Dallas finished a season-high six-game homestand 3-3.

Lauri Markkanen returned to the lineup after missing a game with a low-back strain and scored 33 points to lead the Jazz. Horton-Tucker added 21 points.

76ERS 117, TIMBERWOLVES 94

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Joel Embiid scored 39 points, Tyrese Maxey added 27 and Philadelphia beat Minnesota despite playing without star James Harden.

Harden, the team's second-leading scorer and NBA assist leader, was held out with left foot soreness.

De'Anthony Melton scored 11 for the 76ers, who wrapped up a five-game trip with a 4-1 record.

Anthony Edwards scored 32 points for Minnesota. The Timberwolves shot a season-low 39.5% from the field and were 11 of 36 from 3-point distance.

NETS 118, ROCKETS 96

HOUSTON (AP)—Mikal Bridges scored 30 points, Spencer Dinwiddie added 23 and Brooklyn had a big third quarter to beat Houston for its third straight victory.

Bridges has scored 30 or more points in three straight games and five times overall since coming over from Phoenix on Feb. 9 in the deal that sent Kevin Durant to the Suns. Bridges also had five assists, two blocks and a steal.

Brooklyn has its longest winning streak since a season-high 12-game run from Dec. 7-Jan. 8. The Nets also had their third double-digit win in a row.

Jalen Green had 25 points for the Western Conference-worst Rockets, who were coming off consecutive wins over San Antonio.

THUNDER 137, WARRIORS 128

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 33 points, Josh Giddey had the seventh triple-double of his career and third of the season, and Oklahoma City beat Golden State.

Giddey finished with 17 points, a career-high 17 assists and 11 rebounds as the Thunder won their third straight.

Stephen Curry scored 40 points and made a season-high 10 3-pointers, Klay Thompson scored 23 points and Jonathan Kuminga added 21 for the Warriors.

WIZARDS 199, PISTONS 117

DETROIT (AP)—Daniel Gafford converted a putback of Bradley Beal's airball at the buzzer, and Washington handed Detroit its ninth straight loss.

With the score tied, Beal drove to the baseline and shot a fadeaway floater that was too strong and missed everything. Gafford grabbed the weak-side rebound and banked in the winner.

Beal finished with 32 points and Kristaps Porzingis scored 24 before fouling out in the final minute. Washington (32-34) ended a two-game skid and is 10th in the Eastern Conference, in position for the final spot in the play-in tournament.

Jaden Ivey had 26 points and 12 assists for the NBA-worst Pistons. James Wiseman added 21 points.

By **TERESA M. WALKER**
AP SPORTS WRITER

Ja Morant's skyrocketing basketball career is on hold following a series of off-court decisions by the young NBA star involving a gun in a strip club, actions which have temporarily derailed his meteoric rise.

Morant is the target of a second NBA investigation in weeks with no timetable for his return to the Memphis Grizzlies. The two-time All-Star will miss his second game Tuesday night when Memphis visits the Los Angeles Lakers.

His benching after showing an apparent gun while at a strip club hours after a loss to Denver comes amid a sealed lawsuit alleging he punched a teenager during a pick-up game at his home last summer along with drinking and partying.

Memphis coach Taylor Jenkins says the 23-year-old Morant is a young man that has to "grow and get better."

Morant is the face of a young team with no player 30 or older, in a city that has been the center of the country's gun issues.

Morant sidelined as NBA investigates gun, strip club video

In November 2021, a rapper who had performed at a Grizzlies' halftime show was shot dead while buying cookies in Memphis. In 2010, a 34-year-old former Grizzlies' center was found dead riddled by bullets in a swampy field in southeast of the city.

Morant and the Grizzlies provided a much-needed respite in January while Memphis grieved the death of Tyre Nichols following a brutal attack by five police officers.

All that made Morant's Instagram livestreaming himself shirtless holding an apparent gun next to his left cheek in the early morning hours Saturday at a Colorado club simply stunning.

Reverend Earle Fisher of Abyssinian Baptist Church spoke at both Young Dolph's memorial and funeral and has talked with Morant's father since the viral video. Fisher said a broader conversation is needed about open carry gun laws with some cultural context applied.

"There are some ways to

interpret what Ja did in a way that holds him accountable, but also gives him the grace and the space that's needed to continue to mature as somebody who is the face of the franchise," said Fisher.

Morant has beaten the odds after being an overlooked, faceless college prospect playing summer basketball, taking a road less traveled to become an NBA All-Star and league MVP candidate. Morant signed a five-year, \$193 million contract last summer, but missing too many games this season could cost him a potential \$38 million bonus.

This is only the latest in a series of questionable incidents involving Morant.

A close friend of Morant's was escorted from the arena after arguing with Indiana Pacers' players in January. Morant said the NBA banned his friend from the arena for a year.

Last summer during a pick-up basketball game at Morant's home, a 17-year-old accused him of assault. Inves-

tigators said in January that "there was not enough evidence to proceed with a case."

Of all the scrutiny, this video is the most serious threat yet to Morant's career and the Grizzlies' pursuit of their first championship.

"I'm going to take some time away to get help and work on learning better methods of dealing with stress and my overall well-being," said Morant in a statement Saturday released by the agency that represents him.

The young talented player with tremendous earning potential has plenty of support.

A screen grab of the livestream from the strip club showed Morant wearing the diamond pendant with his Ja 1 shoe logo Nike gave him at last month's All-Star Game. The shoe company is backing him for now, saying in a statement: "We appreciate Ja's accountability and that he is taking the time to get the help he needs."

Morant also has reached out individually to former

coaches and teammates, including current LSU's Matt McMahon.

"I love him," said McMahon, who coached Morant at Murray State. "I, and my coaching staff, are always going to be there to support and help him navigate these challenging times."

Morant's basketball prowess is unquestioned. He was the No. 2 pick overall, 2020 Rookie of the Year and finished seventh in MVP voting last season. He ranks ninth in the NBA averaging 27.1 points a game and fifth with 8.2 assists a game for a team second in the Western Conference.

Now the Grizzlies' coach knows he may be without his best player for an extended period of time.

"He's got huge responsibilities not just for the team, for the city," Jenkins said. "But I know how he's built with that care factor and what steps he's now taking. It's a step in the direction of really being the best ver-

sion of himself."

Morant appeared to have the perfect support system coming into the NBA with his parents repeatedly hitting the road to watch him during his two seasons at Murray State. They followed him to Memphis from South Carolina, and now live near him.

His father, Tee, became a postseason sensation last spring as he made bets and trash-talked with Karl-Anthony Towns' dad. He narrated his son's new Powerade commercial that debuted just last week and refused to excuse his son's actions in a Facebook post.

NBA investigators will want to know if that really was a gun and whether Morant carried it on the team plane. The league could suspend or fine Morant, and he also could face misdemeanor charges in Colorado if police find he was under the influence while holding a gun.

The Grizzlies aren't saying what help Morant is getting, or how long he will be away from his teammates.

No one can at this point.

Sorting out who's No. 1 will continue after NFL combine

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—The process of selecting this year's top overall draft pick began in earnest last week at the NFL's annual scouting combine.

It's just the start of a longer process.

After watching quarterback Anthony Richardson wow scouts on the field, seeing 2021 Heisman Trophy winner Bryce Young check in shorter than expected and defensive tackle Jalen Carter become the center of attention for all the wrong reasons, teams will embark on the next step — pro day evaluations.

Here's a look at some of the more memorable moments from the past week in Indianapolis:

QUARTERBACK SHOW

Most of the focus entering combine week centered on the top two quarterbacks — Young of Alabama and C.J. Stroud of Ohio State. But Richardson of Florida and Will Levis of Kentucky might have been more impressive on the Lucas Oil Stadium turf.

Levis brazenly told reporters he intended to throw so he could showcase his “canon” arm. He did. And while Stroud also looked the part of a franchise quarterback in the throwing portion of drills, Young opted to sit it out after he measured at 5-foot-10 1/8 inches. That would make Young one of the NFL's shortest quarterbacks.

Richardson, meanwhile, helped himself significantly with one of the most athletic performances all week. At



Florida quarterback Anthony Richardson runs a drill at the NFL football scouting combine in Indianapolis, Saturday, March 4, 2023. AP

6-4, 244 pounds, Richardson ran the 40-yard dash in 4.43 seconds and posted a 40 1/2-inch vertical jump and a broad jump of 10 feet-9. All three numbers ranked among the best by any quarterback at the combine since 2003.

CARTER'S TROUBLES

It was a tumultuous week for Carter. After announcing he wouldn't opt out, like many top prospects, he left town Wednesday to return to Georgia, where he was charged with two misdemeanors, reckless driving and racing, in connection with a fatal crash

in January.

The news broke minutes before he was scheduled to speak with reporters. He never stood behind the podium.

On Thursday, he was back in Indy, giving himself a chance to explain immediately to evaluators during team interviews what had happened in Georgia. The next day, bodycam footage surfaced of a police officer giving Carter a warning about speeding — just four months before the fatal crash.

Carter's troubles created an unusual dynamic for his former college teammates who

spoke with reporters on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Each drew questions about Carter's character, Georgia's culture and the crash that killed Bulldogs offensive lineman Devin Willock and a recruiting staff member.

Carter came into the combine in the mix to go No. 1 overall. It's unclear if that's still the case.

BRAVE BENCH

Players and their agents complained loudly last year about doing the bench press on the same day as on-field workouts, so this year organizers

changed the schedule, holding the bench press the day after on-field workouts. The switch led to one of the bravest performances in memory.

Guard Adnrew Vorhees crashed to the turf with a right knee injury during offensive line drills on Sunday. Reports surfaced Monday that he had suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament.

But that didn't stop the Southern California product, who lifted 225 pounds (100 kg) a combine-high 38 times. While the injury may cost him all of next season, he showed everyone his resilience and de-

termination.

TURNING HEADS

Edge rusher Nolan Smith of Georgia and cornerback D.J. Turner II of Michigan also made strong impressions.

First, Smith broke down at the podium on Wednesday while publicly sharing his thoughts about Willock for the first time. The next day, his impressive workout included a 4.39 in the 40 and a 41 1/2-inch vertical jump, both tops in his position group, and a broad jump of 10-8, which was third.

Turner drew attention for his blazing time in the 40, 4.26, on Friday. It was the fourth-fastest time since 2003 and the only sub 4.3 at this year's combine.

Smith already was expected to be a first-round pick, but Turner may get some additional looks thanks to his speed.

COMBINE FUTURE?

NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith made no secret about his thoughts on the combine even before anyone arrived in Indy. He thinks it should be discontinued.

Still, team executives and coaches repeatedly said the combine was a crucial piece of the evaluation puzzle, primarily because of the interviews and medical checks. Many of the 319 invitees even called attending the combine a dream.

It's pretty clear the combine isn't going away any time soon. Last spring, Indy managed to keep the league's second-largest offseason event through 2024, beating out Dallas and Los Angeles.

Lamar Jackson gets nonexclusive franchise tag from Ravens

By **NOAH TRISTER**
AP SPORTS WRITER

The Baltimore Ravens put the nonexclusive franchise tag on Lamar Jackson on Tuesday, preventing him from becoming an unrestricted free agent this month but allowing him to negotiate with other teams.

The deadline for teams to apply the franchise tag was Tuesday. The Ravens were always expected to use it if they didn't reach a long-term deal with Jackson first. The main question was whether they'd use the nonexclusive tag or the exclusive one.

Baltimore could have prevented Jackson from negotiating with anyone else by using the exclusive tag, but that could have cost significantly more. Instead, Jackson would make \$32.4 million if he plays this season on the nonexclusive tag.

Before that happens, Jackson and the Ravens can keep negotiating, and other teams can join in the bidding as well. Bal-

timore would have a chance to match any agreement between Jackson and another team, and if the Ravens chose not to match, they'd receive two first-round draft picks in return.

“There have been many instances across the league and in Baltimore when a player has been designated with the franchise tag and signed a long-term deal that same year,” general manager Eric DeCosta said in a statement. “We will continue to negotiate in good faith with Lamar, and we are hopeful that we can strike a long-term deal that is fair to both Lamar and the Ravens. Our ultimate goal is to build a championship team with Lamar Jackson leading the way for many years to come.”

The Dallas Cowboys used the exclusive franchise tag on quarterback Dak Prescott in 2020. A year later, they reached a long-term deal with him. Kirk Cousins is another quarterback who played on

the franchise tag fairly recently. He did it his final two seasons in Washington before joining the Minnesota Vikings in 2018.

So now the saga between Jackson and the Ravens enters its next phase. Josh Allen, the other star quarterback drafted in 2018 with Jackson, signed a long-term deal with Buffalo two offseasons ago. Jackson, on the other hand, entered last season—the final year of his rookie deal—still without an extension. His contract status didn't seem too disruptive last offseason—he participated in mandatory minicamp and training camp—but there's no telling how the next few months will go.

There obviously is some risk involved with using the nonexclusive tag, especially for a player of Jackson's caliber, but it could resolve this deadlock sooner. If Jackson is able to find a deal he likes from another team, the Ra-

vens could either match it or take the draft picks and allow him to leave.

Jackson, who doesn't have an agent, is one player who should pique the rest of the league's interest, even at the cost of two first-round picks, and his availability to any degree could shake up NFL free agency, which opens later this month.

Source: Raiders place franchise tag on Josh Jacobs

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP)—Josh Jacobs, who led the NFL in rushing last season, has received the franchise tag from the Las Vegas Raiders, a person familiar with the situation said Monday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the move hadn't been announced. NFL Network first reported the Raiders' decision.

Jacobs would make \$10.1 million next season under the franchise tag. The sides have been negotiating a

long-term deal, and if they reach an agreement by July 15, the Raiders would remove the tag.

Jacobs said the week of the Pro Bowl he had no interest in playing under the franchise tag, saying he would be a “hero turned villain.”

If Jacobs doesn't agree to a long-term deal, he would play under the terms of the franchise tag or sit out and forfeit his pay. That's what Le'Veon Bell did when the Pittsburgh Steelers placed the

reached the AFC championship game with him, but his impact on their offense is massive. If he remains with Baltimore, he'll have a new coordinator after the Ravens hired Georgia's Todd Monken.

NOTES: Baltimore also announced Tuesday that it had hired Dennard Wilson as defensive backs coach. He coached defensive backs with the Philadelphia Eagles the past two seasons.

tag on him in 2018.

The Green Bay Packers placed the franchise tag on wide receiver Davante Adams last year. Adams then forced a trade to the Raiders.

Jacobs has repeatedly said he wants to play for the Raiders, and coach Josh McDaniels has made it clear he wants to keep his star running back in the building.

Jacobs led the league in 2022 with 1,653 yards rushing and 2,053 yards from scrimmage.

Coach Hiro happy with young swimmers' improvement

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center head coach Hiroyuki Kimura is happy how his young up-and-coming swimmers gave a good account of themselves during the Tan Holding 50th Anniversary Swim Meet last month.

He said this is exactly why Tsunami Saipan created the "Tsunami Dream Kids Project 2023."

"A lot of our young swimmers became medalists at Tan Holdings 50th Anniversary Swim Meet. In the category of 8-and-under, all medalists were from that project. The 10-and-under division's first and second, the 500m open's first and second were also from the project."

Kimura also noted that the 8-and-under division male

winner, Leo Li, is still 7 years old and the 10-and-under female winner, Gwen Retardo, is still 8 years old.

"Not yet the oldest swimmer in each category ruled the race. How wonderful they were! These two categories really gave me a lot of joy as each of their times were very fast," he said.

Kimura said Tsunami Saipan's top young swimmers can actually compete in longer distances if they wished to.

"Leo Li, Aileen Kim, Simon Shindo, and Gwen Retardo their times were very fast. They can swim even 1,500m but just swim easily. But we don't really care about distance. Swimming is the sport which competes time and doesn't compete distance. So, my requirement to every Tsunami Saipan



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Sera Guerrero, Yoonmin Cho, Gwen Retardo, Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center head coach Hiroyuki Kimura, Aileen Kim, Fiona Yu, and Shana Barman during the awards ceremony of the Tan Holding 50th Anniversary Swim Meet last month.

swimmer is to be conscious about time when we take part in an ocean swim. We never

care about distance."

Kimura added that Sera Guerrero won the women's

500m race at only 9 years old. More impressive is 11-year-old Haoyang Song who fin-

ished second in the men's 500m and he's only been practicing with Tsunami Saipan for eight months.

"Next time in the ocean they will swim in the same category (500m) though they can swim the longer category. Swimming the same distance in a faster time is very important for developing swimmers. Increasing distance makes little sense for junior swimmers. It should not be done. When swimmers get used to the distance, they lose good form, get bad habits, and learn to cheat," according to the Tsunami Saipan mentor.

Kimura also congratulated Tan Holdings on the occasion of their 50th anniversary last year.

"Thank you very much for giving NMI young swimmers such a wonderful opportunity. We really appreciate your continued support."

Tokahao blasts Man Amigos, 16-6



LEIGH GASES

Tokahao's Marco Peter eyes a pitch in their game against Man Amigos in the return of the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.

By LEIGH GASES

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Returning champion Tokahao emerged victorious in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League opener against Man Amigos, 16-6, last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.

The first inning came and went swiftly for Tokahao as pitcher George David shut

down the Man Amigos' lineup. David was backed up offensively as the starting lineup all got on base. Two runs were scored by Robert Bansil and Jeff Cruz.

The Man Amigos then tried to put some work in with the lumber as they led the second inning with a home run by Mark Toves followed by an RBI by Jeff Cabrera.



However, Tokahao had more contact with the ball as four runs came in for them for a 6-2 game.

Man Amigos pitcher Erik Palacios then controlled his pitches in the third inning for no runs by Tokahao as his offense brought in three runs to seal the lead by just one. This was thanks to Joey Dela Cruz's home run

which brought in Pete and Manny Sablan.

But then, Tokahao's bats came alive again in the fourth inning with a lead-off home run by Clint Quitugua and a two-run shot by Jeff Cruz.

The Man Amigos couldn't get past Tokahao anymore as the lead was extended in the last inning when a grand slam was connected by Bansil and 6 more runs came in. The game then ended via run-mercy rule when Man Amigos failed to produce any more runs.

Asahi 10, Tutturamz 0

Asahi defeated Tutturamz in a shutout game, 10-0.

It was strong pitching work from Asahi's Dominic Hideo who put down the lineup of Tutturamz in all five innings for an early end to the game.

His offense backed him up with a 7-run second inning as Ish Masuo hit a solo home run after the first four in the lineup came in to score. Hector Efraim then brought in an

RBI single and his teammate after him rounded the bases on account of a defensive error.

Only two more runs were scored in the next innings but it was enough to secure the W as Tutturamz had no luck with the bat that day.

Sufa 11, Hagu Lamun 5

Both teams were evenly matched in the first inning, but Sufa pulled away for a 11-5 win against Hagu La'mun.

Hagu La'mun pitcher Joe Celis went 1-2-3 against the Sufa lineup for three outs in a row, but Sufa got their bearings in the second inning as Ben Mesa and Jun Salalila rounded the bases for a 2-0 lead.

The offense of Hagu La'mun wasn't there yet in the next inning but woke up in the next for a three-run inning. However, Sufa mirrored that score with a home run by Audie Maratita for a 5-3 game.

Sufa's offense kept the momentum going into later innings with 6 more runs batted in but only 2 more were made by Hagu La'mun, for a final score of 11-5

Peleliu 11, Redmen 8

Peleliu outlasted the Redmen, 11-8.

Even with first blood drawn

by the Redmen for a 5-run lead, Peleliu procrastinated and waited for the last innings to overtake for the W.

Peleliu pitcher Ray Villagomez handed the Redmen four scoreless innings which allowed his team to capitalize and add runs of their own.

In the last inning, Peleliu was tied with the Redmen, 7-7, but thanks to back-to-back hits from the middle of the lineup, four runs were scored and Peleliu were able to pull away, 11-8.

Wazzup 17, Aimeliik 1 Time 16

In a close matchup, Wazzup managed to slip past Aimeliik 1 Time, 17-16.

Although Wazzup was down 11 points with just 4 runs scored by the fourth inning, the bats of Aimeliik 1 Time sizzled and died out when it counted the most in the last innings.

Wazzup's Derick Aguon hit one out of the park in the 6th inning and 8 runs were scored before Aimeliik's pitcher Ken Kaipat could stop the bleeding. Three runs were made by Wazzup in the last inning, while Aimeliik only mustered one for a 17-16 game.

TAN

From Page 20

letics. Tan, who is a member of New York's Fordham University cross country team, reset the NMI indoor record in the 3,000m run with her time of 10:57.58 in the Ramapo Season Opener.

Tan also won the April award for resetting two national records—the first one in the 5,000m run at the 56th Annual Colonia Relay in Virginia and then the 10K race in the Metropolitan Outdoor Track and Field Championships in New York. Tan later won a gold in the 10K event in the Oceania Athletics Championships and silver in the 5K.

Tan wasn't present to receive her award so her father, NMSA president Jerry Tan, received it for her.

For the weightlifters, save for San Nicolas, this is their first Athlete of the Year Award which makes it even more special.

Santos said, "I guess I was surprised when I won. I thought I wasn't [going to] win. I would just like to thank everyone who supported me near and far. I would also like to dedicate this win to my family, Trench Tech, Lone Fox, and to everyone who continues to support all the sports."

Limes for his part said, "I was honored to be chosen as one of the male athletes of the year. I had a feeling it would

be an athlete that participated in the Mini Games. I just didn't think they'd choose that many of us. I'd like to thank my family, the CNMI weightlifting team, Latte Built, and NMSA."

For San Nicolas, this is his second win with his first back in 2017. He dedicates his win to "my youth athletes, training partners, and my coaches. A lot of times I've always wanted to quit this sport. I just hate it so much that I love it. Some have taken my time and effort for granted, and some are thankful. At the end of the day, it's all for weightlifting in the CNMI."

Barnhouse thanked the weightlifting team for training hard and thanked John Davis,

Jeanne Rayphand, Greg Borja, and Ben Babauta, "and everyone else who helped make weightlifting at the Games possible."

All nine individual Athletes of the Year awardees received \$1,200 worth of gift certificates—a two-night stay gift certificate at Crowne Plaza Resort, with breakfast for two and Sunday Brunch for two at the Terrace, and Ataari Dinner Show for two, courtesy of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation.

The event was sponsored by the TSL Foundation led by executive director Merlie Tolentino.

Results of the other NMSA Sports Banquet awards will come out in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

ALEKSENKO

From Page 20

after seeing the nominees for the Student Athlete of the Year Award. My thoughts from yesterday was that I'll have to work way harder than now to compete at a higher level. The award just motivates me to grind harder and it makes me want to win more awards in the future by becoming a better athlete!"

"I dedicate this award to my parents the most this

time because they deserve it! They were always supportive throughout the years and always reminded me to be grateful for what I have done. They always motivate me to move forward even when I'm struggling," said Jin.

The event was sponsored by the TSL Foundation led by executive director Merlie Tolentino.

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Davis' 30 points,
22 rebounds
lead Lakers past
Grizzlies
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Coach Hiro
happy with
young swimmers'
improvement
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tan, Sinclair, weightlifters are top athletes



NICOLETA PAPAVALAKIS

Tan



NMSA

Sinclair

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

The CNMI just summed up a whirlwind, sports-crazed year despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it difficult to determine winners for the 2022 athletes of the year as the first ever Pacific Mini Games the Northern Marianas hosted saw stellar performances from each of its athletes.

The Northern Marianas Sports Association had their work cut out for them as they presented the Male Athlete of the Year and Female Athlete of the Year awards during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet Tuesday evening at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

As a first, not only one Male Athlete of the Year was chosen for 2022, but six—tennis' Colin Sinclair and weightlifting's Raymond Santos, Jason Limes, Angel San Nicolas, David Barnhouse, and Joey Colisao.

For the Female Athlete of the Year, Tania Tan was bestowed the 2022 Female Athlete of the Year for her near-perfect execution on the track.

Sinclair won three gold medals in the Mini Games for

the men's team, men's singles, and men's doubles; Santos won three gold medals in the Mini Games and one in the Oceania Weightlifting Championships against five other

competitors; San Nicolas won two gold medals in the Mini Games and one in the Oceania Weightlifting Championships against four

competitors; Barnhouse won three gold medals in the Mini Games and one in the Oceania Weightlifting Championships; Limes won two gold medals in the Mini Games and one in the Oceania Weightlifting Championships against three competitors; and Colisao won one gold medal in the Mini Games.

Tan won the Athlete of the Month awards in January and April 2022 in her sport of ath-

See TAN on Page 19



LEIGH GASES

The 2022 NMSA Male Athletes of the Year are Joey Colisao, fourth from left; Raymond Santos, sixth from left; Jason Limes, seventh from right; David Barnhouse, fifth from right; and Angel San Nicolas, not present; and Colin Sinclair, not present but represented national tennis coach Jeff Race, third from right. The 2022 Female Athlete of the Year is Tania Tan, not present, was represented by her dad, Jerry Tan, center. The NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet was held Tuesday evening at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

Aleksenko, Jin hailed '22 student athletes

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

A couple of Marianas High School students—Isaiah Aleksenko and Zhi Min Jin—were named 2022 NMSA Student Athletes of the Year during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Banquet Tuesday at the Hibiscus Hall in the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

Aleksenko also won this award in 2021 making it back-to-back wins for the Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center stalwart.

For 2022, he was the only two-time monthly winner among the male nominees having won in February and

December.

In February, he dominated the 7th Saipan Aquathlon and won the December award for his record-breaking swims in the 16th FINA World Championships (25M) in Australia.

Aleksenko was also part of the NMI Triathlon Team that won the bronze medal in the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games.

Jin, in the Mini Games, won the gold medal in the golf women's individual event, besting adult competitors in the event. She was also named as the Best Junior Athlete of the quadrennial event.

Aleksenko said about his win, "I'm very happy that my

hard work paid off. I would like to thank my mom Yulia, God, my family, my coach Hiroyuki Kimura, Ms. Yuko [Kimura], and my teammates. I hope I can go for three years in a row, so I will work even harder this year."

After winning for the second time, he said "It feels great, I'm very happy that I was able to win two years in a row and that means a lot to me. There are a lot of great athletes out there as well and I hope they also get the chance to get this award in the future."

For Jin, she said "To be honest, I wasn't expecting much

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A couple of Marianas High School students—Isaiah Aleksenko, fifth from left, and Zhi Min Jin, fifth from right, were named the 2022 NMSA Student Athletes of the Year during the 2022 NMSA Annual Sports Award Banquet Tuesday at the Hibiscus Hall in the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

LEIGH GASES

